

Whitehill Primary School

Whitehill Street West, Heaton Norris, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 1PB

Inspection dates 19–20 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, those who join during the school year and the most able is not as good as it could be overall.
- Teachers do not always set work in lessons that makes pupils think hard enough and achieve as well as they could.
- Pupils are not given enough time to practise mental mathematics and problem-solving skills in mathematics lessons, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to extend their reading and writing skills in other subjects.
- The marking of pupils' work does not always help them to improve.
- A small proportion of pupils are absent from school too often.
- Behaviour requires improvement. This is because staff do not always follow the school's behaviour policy closely enough and, as a result, a small proportion of pupils do not behave as well as they should.
- The skills of all senior and middle leaders in checking the quality of teaching or how well pupils learn are not sharp enough.
- Governors have not checked with enough care that all pupils are achieving the best they can.

The school has the following strengths

- It is welcoming and provides well for the pastoral needs of pupils and their families.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress.
- Many pupils behave well. Nearly all pupils say, and their parents agree, that this is a safe school.
- Strong leadership from the headteacher has led to rapid improvements to teaching and to the good progress pupils made in reading and writing in 2013.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 11 lessons or parts of lessons, including a behaviour walk. One lesson was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, parents and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors examined the school’s own documentation relating to pupils’ progress, school self-evaluation and policies relating to safeguarding and behaviour. They carried out a scrutiny of pupils’ work in their books.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 1, 2 and 6. They spoke informally to groups of pupils during play and lunch times.
- The inspectors took account of the 22 parent responses received at the time of the inspection from the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the responses of parents who spoke to the inspectors.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Clare Henderson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Shutt

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well-above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average.
- The proportion of pupils whose speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school during the school year is above average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school offers a breakfast club each day.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all is good or outstanding by ensuring that:
 - the work set in lessons helps all pupils, particularly those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, those new to the school and the most able, to achieve as well as they can.
 - the marking of pupils' work always helps them to improve and enough time is given to them to follow up on the advice.
- Raise achievement so that more pupils, particularly the most able, achieve the higher levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by providing:
 - more opportunities to extend their reading and writing skills in all the subjects they study
 - more time to practise mental mathematics and problem-solving skills in mathematics lessons, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Improve the behaviour of the small proportion of pupils who do not behave as well as they should in lessons and at play and lunch times, by ensuring all staff consistently follow the school's behaviour policy.
- Raise attendance further by continuing to work with those pupils, and their families, who are absent from school too often.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - providing more opportunities for all senior and middle leaders to develop their skills in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' learning
 - increasing the skills of the governing body in order that they can fully check with senior leaders that all pupils, particularly those eligible for the pupil premium, achieve the best they can.

An external review of the schools use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to

assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, those who join during the school year and the most able do not always achieve as well as they could. Because of this, the school is not promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination fully.
- Although the pupils who join the school during the school year receive a warm welcome they are not assessed well enough for work to be set at the right level for them to succeed.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2013, though average in writing and mathematics, was below average in reading. Inspection evidence from lesson observations, school records and pupils' current work in their books shows that attainment in all subjects is currently improving rapidly in Years 1 and 2 and particularly in reading.
- This improvement is because teaching is stronger and pupils now have more opportunities to read widely, to practise their letters and sounds and basic mathematics skills more systematically and frequently.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2013, and over time, has been below average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, from their individual starting points, progress in reading and writing in 2013 was good. This was not the case in mathematics.
- Inspection evidence shows that the rate of progress in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is slower than it should be given the abilities of the pupils. This is because they do not always have enough chances to extend their mental mathematical and problem-solving skills in mathematics lessons.
- Because work set in lessons does not provide pupils with enough chances to think hard, the most able pupils do not achieve the higher levels of attainment. For example, although the most able pupils use correct grammar and punctuation, few write pieces with more complex ideas and vocabulary.
- The attainment of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding in Year 6 in 2013 was below that of similar pupils nationally and was about one year below that of their classmates. School information shows that, although this gap is beginning to close in some classes, it is not happening quickly enough because teachers, senior leaders and governors do not check the progress of these pupils closely enough and provide the support necessary to remedy any slowness in learning.
- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are below those expected for their age, particularly in their speaking, social and emotional development. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes because they have good opportunities to develop their reading, writing and calculation skills through exciting play opportunities in good quality indoor and outdoor provision. As a result they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language to make good progress due to the good support they receive in lessons and when working in small groups with staff.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is uneven across the school and, over time, has not helped pupils to make good or better progress in mathematics. This is because pupils do not always have enough chances to extend their mental mathematical and problem-solving skills in mathematics lessons.
- Teaching reviewed by inspectors, and the school records of how successful teaching is in extending pupils' learning, indicate that teaching is not consistently good.
- Teachers do not always set work in lessons that helps all pupils to make better than expected

progress, particularly in mathematics, and thereby achieve as well as they can. When this happens, some lapses in pupils' behaviour occur because pupils do not have to think hard enough or occasionally because the teacher does not fully adhere to the schools' behaviour policy

- The quality of verbal feedback provided by teachers and support staff is good. The quality of the marking found in pupils' books is not always good. At its best, pupils are given clear guidance in what they need to do to improve their work and they are also provided with the time to do this. However, this is not consistent throughout the school.
- The teaching and checking of the progress made by pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is not sufficiently well managed and, as a result, these pupils do not generally achieve as well as other groups of pupils during their time in the school.
- When pupils learn well, for instance, in Years 2 and 4, teachers know and plan for the wide range of abilities of the pupils in the class. They continually check pupils' understanding during the lesson, expertly manage the behaviour of all pupils and ask questions that make pupils think hard. In such lessons, pupils are fully engrossed in their learning and achieve well.
- The care for disabled pupils and those with special education needs or who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language is good because adults ensure pupils receive the correct learning and pastoral support to match their needs.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children make good progress because the adults plan engaging activities that capture children' imagination, appeal to their interests and make them think deeply about the subject.
- An example of this was observed by inspectors as a group of children imagined they were shape detectives searching for the different shapes hidden in the outdoor classroom. They were interested and fully absorbed in learning as they gleefully identified and named the shapes they found.
- Specialist teachers, such as for information and communication technology and a highly talented guitar teacher, are used well to extend pupils' creative and musical skills. For instance, pupils were observed enthusiastically and skilfully playing guitars.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Behaviour observed in most lessons by inspectors was generally good. This has a positive effect on pupils' rapidly improving achievement. However, occasionally, a few pupils talk whilst the teacher is talking and put other pupils off their work in lessons.
- The groups of pupils the inspectors spoke to and the school records show that behaviour around the school and during playtimes and lunchtime is generally good. However, pupils say a few classmates are quick to react with aggressive behaviour and that, when this happens, it spoils their lessons and playtimes.
- During the inspection, most pupils were observed behaving well in the dining hall, on the playground and around school. They are generally well mannered to each other, to adults and to visitors.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the many different forms bullying can take, including cyber bullying and that based on prejudice. They say that, when bullying takes place, adults generally deal with it quickly and successfully.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- Although most parents spoken to and those who gave their views on Parent View believe their children are safe and happy, a few say that the poor behaviour of a few pupils is not always dealt with right away in some classes.
- Most pupils are proud of their school and feel safe because, in their words, 'We are like one big family.' They say they enjoy the good range of responsibilities they have, such as being elected as school councillors or play leaders.

- The school also ensures that pupils understand how to use the internet safely and that they know why social media sites can be dangerous.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are safe and secure and settle quickly because of the good levels of care provided by all the adults.
- A daily breakfast club and a full range of sporting activities, attended by a high proportion of pupils, make a strong contribution to pupils' physical development and personal well-being.
- Although over time attendance is improving, it is still below average. There is a small proportion of pupils who do not attend regularly or respond to the wide raft of rewards on offer for those whose attendance improves.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Senior leaders and governors have not made sure that all groups of pupils achieve as well as they could in reading, writing and mathematics over time. As well as that, not all senior and middle leaders have the skills to check that teaching and pupils' learning is good enough.
- Despite these weaknesses, the strong 'can do' attitude of the headteacher, shared by teachers, pupils and governors, has led to rapid improvement to the quality of teaching in some classes.
- These positive attitudes have also led to good progress for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in Years 1 and 2 and in reading and writing. This demonstrates the school is set to continue to improve further.
- Clear action plans are in place to continue improving the quality of teaching and to make sure all pupils consistently make good or better progress. The local authority is providing high levels of support in this work.
- To help this happen more quickly, targets set for teachers concentrate on improving pupils' achievement, and are linked to training and to teachers' salary progression.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well because good opportunities for pupils to extend their artistic, musical and sporting skills are built into lessons well. However, it does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to extend their reading and writing skills in all the subjects they study.
- The new primary school sport funding has increased pupils' participation in physical education and sport and is contributing well to developing better physical well-being for pupils. However, the impact of this spending has not yet been checked by the governors.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and child-protection procedures meet statutory requirements.
- Most parents say they receive plenty of information about the work of the school and of how they can help in their children's education by ensuring, for example, their children attend regularly.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Although governors are supportive of the school, they have not checked fully with senior leaders that all pupils are learning well enough. They receive pupils' progress information from the headteacher but they have not always questioned the rate of progress of different groups of pupils, particularly that of the pupils eligible for the pupil premium. They have relied too heavily on information from leaders without considering all the information available. Governors are now more involved in the checking of the staff's performance and understand that clear steps are needed to show that there has been improvement when necessary. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and members of the governing body carry out regular checks to make sure that pupils are kept safe. Governors check the spending of the pupil premium and primary school sports funding but do not fully check how this is making a difference to the achievement of the pupils involved. They review spending of the school budget regularly.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	106084
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	440734

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Morris
Headteacher	Jill Connell
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2013
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