

Whipperley Infant Academy

Whipperley Ring, Farley Hill, Luton, LU1 5QY

Inspection dates 23–24 September 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected as an academy | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|----------|
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | Good | | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | Good | | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | Good | | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | Good | | 2 |
| Early years provision | Requires improvement | | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders and managers have effectively promoted good achievement, effective teaching and good behaviour and safety for pupils.
- The new headteacher brings good experience and enthusiasm to her post. She has quickly gained an astute understanding of the school's performance.
- The headteacher is successfully building a new team of leaders and staff, who are increasingly effective.
- Pupils show a keen interest in their learning. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- Whipperley is a harmonious school community where pupils respect and value different cultures and faiths. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Procedures to ensure that pupils are safe are good. Pupils report that they feel safe and very well looked after by staff.
- Attendance is steadily improving because of the decisive action being taken by the school.
- Teaching promotes good progress for most pupils.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and standards are usually average by the end of Year 2
- The school provides a good range of subjects, topics and additional activities. Opportunities for sport are strong.
- The school is successfully helping parents to support their children's learning.
- Parents are pleased with the care and education provided for their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few cases, work set for pupils is too easy, particularly the most able.
- Not enough children are making good progress in Reception, especially in early reading, writing and number skills, because of inconsistencies in provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. A number of lessons were seen jointly with the members of the senior leadership team.
- Considerable time was spent analysing pupils’ work and the information about pupils’ attainment and progress.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other staff, a representative from the local authority, governors and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 18 responses to the online survey, Parent View and the results of the school’s own parental survey of February 2014, where there were 120 responses.
- Questionnaires from 33 members of staff were analysed.
- The inspectors examined a range of documents including school policies, safeguarding procedures and self evaluation.

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Derek Watts, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Janet Watson | Additional Inspector |
| Cynthia Ashford | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- About a quarter of the pupil population are from a Pakistani heritage. Other pupils are from a range of ethnic backgrounds including White British, Other White, Bangladeshi or African heritages.
- About two thirds of the pupils speak English as an additional language and this is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion of such pupils supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below average. Two pupils have such statements, and one is supported by an education, health and care plan.
- An above average proportion of disadvantaged pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school part way through the year is higher than usually found. Some new arrivals enter speaking little or no English.
- Whipperley Infant Academy converted to become an academy school on 4 January 2013. When its predecessor school, Whipperley Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- A long-standing headteacher retired in April 2014. An interim headteacher led the school during the summer of 2014 and the current headteacher took up her post in September 2014.
- There has recently been a number of changes to the teaching force.
- This is the school's first inspection since becoming an academy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the teaching so that more pupils make rapid progress in Years 1 and 2 by ensuring that all teachers set work that successfully challenges all pupils and, in particular, extends the most able.
- Improve the provision in the early years so that most children make good progress in all the areas of learning by:
 - ensuring than children do not spend too long waiting for directions and instructions about their learning
 - making sure that activities are modified to suit the needs of different groups of children
 - ensuring that all activities have a clear purpose and that children understand what they are expected to learn.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school has been well led and managed since becoming an academy. Pupils have achieved well because of good teaching and an interesting curriculum. Leaders and staff have effectively promoted good behaviour and safety.
- The new headteacher brings good experience and enthusiasm to her post. She is firmly focused on raising achievement and providing high quality teaching so that all groups of pupils make good progress in all year groups. She has quickly gained an astute and accurate overview of the school's performance.
- There have been a number of staff changes recently. The headteacher is in the process of building an effective team of staff. Leaders and other staff share the headteacher's aspirations and vision for the school. The leaders of English and mathematics are very new to their posts and have, therefore, not had time to have had an impact on pupils' achievement. Nevertheless, they have a clear overview of pupils' performance. There are well thought out plans to develop the roles of new leaders. There also clear plans to improve children's learning in the early years.
- The school is a very positive, harmonious and welcoming community. Leaders and staff successfully promote care, cooperation, respect, responsibility and tolerance. Pupils are successfully taught to relate positively to adults and to other pupils. They have a good understanding of different cultures and faiths. The pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for life in modern Britain.
- Appropriate arrangements for appraising the performance of teachers have been developed. Teachers' targets to improve their skills are well linked to pupils' progress and to school improvement priorities. Leaders provide effective training and support to improve teachers' practice in the classroom. There are good plans to support new teachers, particularly those who have just qualified.
- The school's curriculum provides a range of subjects and topics which promote good achievement for pupils and contribute effectively to their personal development. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the additional activities, particularly sport. Good progress is being made in implementing new curriculum and assessment arrangements.
- Additional funding is used effectively to provide eligible disadvantaged pupils with needed support, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The funding and support are having a positive impact on their progress.
- The primary school sports grant is used successfully to extend pupils' opportunities for sport and physical development. Two specialist sports coaches have been employed to teach pupils and provide training and professional development for staff. Pupils' participation in sporting activities has increased and teachers' skills have been extended. Pupils thoroughly enjoy taking part in athletics, gymnastics, cricket, football, karate and tennis. They have developed a greater understanding of teamwork, fairness and the rules of games.
- The school has built positive partnerships with parents and is effective in helping parents to support their children's learning. For example, family learning sessions are well attended, where staff provide useful guidance on how children can be helped in literacy and numeracy. The results of surveys show that parents are pleased with the care and education provided for their children.
- The school has recently bought back into some of the local authority's services. Local authority personnel have a good understanding of the school's performance and are providing good support. The headteacher has clear plans to use a range of external advisers and consultants in developing the leadership skills of new staff and the provision in early years.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body are supportive and provide constructive challenge in order to hold leaders to account.

- They possess a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They know how well pupils are making progress, and use data effectively to check this.
- The governors are well informed about the quality of teaching. They fully understand requirements relating to the management of staff performance and the importance of promotion and salary increases reflecting the progress that pupils make.
- Governors ensure that additional funding is used correctly and check the impact of spending on pupils' progress.
- They carry out their statutory duties well. For example, they have ensured that all safeguarding procedures meet requirements. They have worked with staff to make sure that tolerance and respect for different cultures and religions are promoted effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is also good. The school's records of incidents show that behaviour has been typically good over time. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and very well looked after by the staff. They remarked, 'Teachers look after us'.
- All parents that completed the surveys stated that their children feel safe and are well looked after. Almost all parents believe that the school promotes good behaviour and all stated that bullying is effectively dealt with. These positive views reflect the findings of the inspection.
- Children in Reception settle into school well. Adults establish positive relationships and manage them effectively. Children enjoy the indoor and outdoor activities provided. They are considerate and kind to others.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show a keen interest in learning. They informed inspectors, 'We get to learn new things'. Pupils are attentive, cooperative and participate in activities with enthusiasm. They show good levels of concentration and rise to the challenge of the work set. Good behaviour and strong relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils themselves, support their learning well.
- Pupils thrive in the school's positive and welcoming atmosphere. Teachers and staff create attractive classrooms and corridors to inspire and motivate them. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted successfully. Pupils are considerate, courteous, and respectful and value other people's views. They show a good understanding of different cultures and faiths. A Year 2 pupil commented, 'We learn more about people'.
- Pupils show a clear understanding of bullying. They described it as, 'Hurting people's feelings' and 'Being not very nice to someone'. Discussions with pupils, the results of parental surveys and the school's records indicate that bullying is very rare.
- Pupils' attendance has been a weak area of the school. Attendance was low in 2013 but it is steadily improving because of the decisive action taken by the school. Families are responding well to the school's drive to improve attendance. There is an effective system of rewards for good attendance. The welfare officer for attendance makes a valuable contribution to checking and improving attendance.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching successfully promotes good learning and progress for most pupils, particularly those in Years 1 and 2. Teaching is less consistent in the early years and children's progress is too variable to be good.
- Throughout the school, teachers establish strong relationships with pupils and manage them well. Teachers create a positive climate for learning and encourage pupils to do their best.
- Pupils benefit from teachers' clear demonstrations, explanations and instructions. Pupils are attentive and make good gains in acquiring knowledge and understanding. Teachers used questioning effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and to check that they have understood new learning.

- The teaching of reading skills, including phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is effective. Pupils make good progress in writing because they are given good opportunities to write in a range of subject areas. There are some good examples of homework being used to extend and reinforce pupils' reading and writing skills. Pupils in Year 2 found factual and interesting information about famous people such as Nelson Mandela and Muhammad Ali. They wrote clear accounts about the life and achievements of these characters. Drawings, illustrations and diagrams were used to enhance their writing.
- Teachers use demonstration and practical apparatus to successfully develop pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills. Interesting activities are provided for pupils to apply their knowledge and skills to solve problems.
- In most cases, teachers use assessment information about pupils' attainment well to plan their teaching and to set challenging work for different groups of pupils. As a result, pupils are successfully engaged in learning and their interest is maintained. They make good progress in acquiring knowledge, deepening their understanding and in acquiring skills.
- However, there are times when the work set is not sufficiently demanding to extend pupils' learning, especially that of the most able. When this happens, pupils do not progress as well as they should.
- Specific specialist support is provided for pupils at an early stage of learning English. This helps them to make good gains in acquiring English so that they have full access to the subjects and topics being studied. The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is effective. Teaching assistants are used well to provide additional guidance to these pupils where needed.
- Teachers provide effective feedback on how well pupils are learning. Pupils remarked, 'They tell us how we can get better'. The marking of pupils' work is constructive and helpful. Praise is given for good work and clear comments guide improvement.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most pupils in the school are achieving well. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is usually average in reading, writing and mathematics. Children's progress in the early years is too variable and requires improvement. There is no significant difference in the progress made by pupils from different ethnic heritages.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium make good progress because of specific teaching and well-focused support. In 2013, eligible pupils in Year 2 attained higher standards than the other pupils, particularly in reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They receive effective support and the work set is well suited to their needs.
- Pupils who join the school part way through the year settle quickly and make good progress. This is because their needs are carefully assessed and they receive the specific support they need. For example, new arrivals at an early stage of English make rapid progress in acquiring English.
- The most-able pupils are usually challenged and extended, but this is not consistent. An average proportion of pupils attain the higher levels in reading and writing by the end of Year 2. However, not enough Year 2 pupils attained the higher Level 3 in mathematics in 2014. In some lessons, work is not sufficiently challenging to extend the most able.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to reading and make good progress. The results of the Year 1 phonics screening tests have been below average. However, pupils reach average standards in reading by the end of Year 2.

- Pupils make good progress in writing. They write for different purposes and in a range of subjects. In the past, boys' performance has lagged behind that of girls, but effective action is being taken to close this gap in attainment. Boys and girls in Year 2 made good progress in their writing as they described a sea voyage in the role of Christopher Columbus. They use adjectives and connectives well as they described the event and their feelings during a night storm. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are developing well.
- In mathematics, pupils acquire essential calculation skills well. They apply these effectively to solve problems. The study of pupils' work shows how pupils in Year 1 gather information on favourite fruits in the class. They presented this information as a bar graph. Positive steps are being taken to extend the most able in mathematics.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement because not enough children are making good progress in early reading, writing and number skills.
- Children enter the Reception classes often with knowledge, understanding and skills well below those typical for their age. Teaching requires improvement because learning activities are not sufficiently modified to suit the needs of different groups of children. This means they do not achieve as well as they could, especially the more able.
- At times, children's learning is hindered when they spend too long waiting to be directed to activities. Furthermore, some activities lack specific purpose so it is not clear what children are expected to learn.
- Adults have established positive relationships with the children. The children feel safe, grow in confidence and relate well to adults and to their peers. Children share resources, take turns and show consideration for others. Children are well behaved in the Reception classes.
- Children are developing a sound knowledge of the world around them through the interesting activities provided. They are also developing physical skills reasonably well through outdoor activities and through handling practical apparatus.
- The leadership and management of early years are promoting children's personal and social development well. However, assessment, planning and teaching are not strong enough to promote good progress for all groups of children in key areas of learning.
- The new headteacher has already begun to tackle these issues so that teaching and progress are improving.

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

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| Unique reference number | 139219 |
| Local authority | Luton |
| Inspection number | 448639 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 4–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 266 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Susan Watts |
| Headteacher | Amelia Whitehouse |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected as an academy |
| Telephone number | 01582 725868 |
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