

Whetstone Field Primary School

Beaufort Way, Walsall, West Midlands, WS9 0HJ

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers use their knowledge of what pupils have already achieved to plan work which stretches them most of the time.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and leads to good achievement.
- Teachers' marking and feedback to pupils is good and helps them to improve their work.
- An exciting and vibrant range of topics across all subjects helps pupils develop good literacy and mathematical skills.
- Pupils are happy at school and work hard. They feel safe, and their good behaviour and positive attitudes contribute well to their learning.
- Pupils and parents express a high level of satisfaction and confidence in the work of the school.
- The headteacher's drive for improvement has led to rapid development in teaching and pupils' achievement. All staff are committed to pupils' success.
- Governors understand the school's strengths and areas to develop, and are skilled in checking its work and holding staff to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some classes, teachers do not expect enough of the most-able pupils to help them make the best possible progress.
- Opportunities for pupils to learn about the many different cultures in Britain are not fully developed.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in all classes and visited 16 lessons accompanied by the headteacher.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils, parents, the headteacher, a representative of the local authority, other staff and governors.
- The inspectors took account of letters from parents, and the 35 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also took account of the school's records of parent surveys and the nine responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read, looked at their work, and had discussions with groups of pupils and individuals about their learning.
- The inspectors checked the school's evaluation of its work, performance management procedures, records of achievement, the improvement plan, the governing body minutes, and records of behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Lynne Bradbury, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christopher Crouch

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher was appointed at the beginning of the previous school year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding so that all pupils make the best possible progress, by ensuring that expectations for the most-able pupils are equally high in all classes.
- Provide a greater range of opportunities for pupils to learn about the many different cultures represented in the United Kingdom.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's drive and urgency for improvement have ensured that staff, governors and leaders are committed to achieving the school's aim of enabling every pupil to reach the highest standards. This focus has enabled most pupils to make rapid progress and reach high standards.
- Governors and other leaders have developed skills which are making a significant contribution to improving pupils' progress. They regularly check the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in order to highlight important priorities for development and training, and then they plan carefully in order to address these areas successfully.
- Judgements about teachers' work and career progression are based upon pupils' progress. This link has helped to improve the rates of pupils' progress.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an important focus for the school and is evident in all subjects and aspects of school life. This leads to: enthusiasm for learning; a willingness by pupils to care for others; and an understanding and tolerance of differences. Pupils do not currently have enough opportunities to explore and understand the full range of cultural diversity in Britain.
- English and mathematics skills are developed well through the vibrant and exciting topics which cover many subjects. Pupils develop their reading and writing by responding to the stories and language in the books they read. They apply their mathematical skills through topics like houses and homes or the ancient Egyptians.
- The commitment towards equal opportunities for all pupils is demonstrated in the good level of progress made by all groups by Year 6. Extra funding is used to pay for additional staff and equipment, and it has been effective in ensuring that pupils with various special educational needs are welcomed into the school and make good progress.
- The local authority has given valuable support to the school and has helped to develop teaching in literacy. It has also supported staff training in assessing what pupils have achieved.
- Governors and leaders have used the sports funding to employ a sports coach and to ensure that pupils have high-quality sporting experiences. They take part in these sporting opportunities within the school day and after school with great enthusiasm and excitement. The school has also ensured that staff have received training to develop their teaching skills in this area.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring their commitment and professional skills to supporting and challenging the school. They have undertaken a range of training and development to help them to be able to judge the work of the school for themselves. They set ambitious targets for staff performance, and have rigorous systems for checking progress and holding staff to account, including in making salary decisions. Governors use this information to identify appropriate areas for development, and they check progress against these carefully. All judgements are made based upon pupils' achievement. Finance is matched to improvement plans and carefully managed and monitored. Governors ensure that extra funding, such as the pupil premium and the additional school sports funding, is used to raise levels of progress. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their positive attitudes help them to make good progress. They do their best, take care with their work and are enthusiastic about their learning. They present their work well and take account of teachers' marking and comments to improve their work.
- Pupils in all classes say that they trust their staff to help if they have difficulties. Staff build good relationships with pupils and help them to get on well together in the playground or when they are working.
- Most pupils are polite and respectful of adults, and each other. They are very proud of the responsibilities they have within school.
- Most pupils are very keen to learn and the few disruptions to lessons are dealt with effectively by staff.
- Pupils enjoy earning rewards and respond well to praise. Most pupils move about the school, and play with others at playtime, sensibly. Pupils are proud to be playground leaders, and others trust them to help when it is needed.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of subjects in their exciting topic work and are keen to take part in extensive sports and clubs outside lessons. They enjoy football, rugby, tennis, judo and many other opportunities

which have grown out of the use of the sports grant.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safeguarding processes meet statutory requirements, and effective policies and practices are followed by all staff and pupils.
- Pupils understand the many forms that bullying can take, including through the use of mobile phones and the internet. They know how to keep themselves safe, and say that if any bullying happened, it would be dealt with very quickly by the staff.
- Staff, pupils and those parents who met with the inspectors said that behaviour is good and that pupils are happy and safe. Records within school show that this has been the case for a long time.
- Attendance is above that nationally, and there are effective policies in place to support any pupil who has difficulties in this area.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Staff understand what their pupils can already do and typically plan suitably demanding work which moves their learning on. As a result, they make good progress.
- The most-able pupils make rapid progress, develop high-level skills and reach high standards by the end of Year 6. However, they are not stretched consistently in every class and do not always have sufficient opportunity for high-level investigations and problem solving.
- Staff check the progress of all pupils carefully so that they can identify any pupils at risk of falling behind and give them extra support.
- Pupils have lots of opportunities to practise their skills, and staff use the rewards system well to ensure that pupils take great pride in their achievement and behaviour.
- Teachers' high-quality marking and feedback help pupils to know how to improve their work, and pupils are keen to correct it.
- Pupils are keen to complete their homework, which contributes well to their progress. It is based on practising skills in reading, number and spelling, and, each week, there is a piece of homework linked to the class topic.
- Most staff have high expectations of all pupils. They work hard to establish good relationships with pupils and among pupils themselves. They explore themes of friendship, and right and wrong, during lessons.
- Teachers ensure that reading, writing and mathematics skills are developed in the exciting topics which pupils greatly enjoy. This helps them to work hard in all subjects and do their best to achieve high standards.
- Teaching assistants help pupils develop their skills through small group work or supporting pupils with special educational needs, and this makes an important contribution to their learning.
- Staff ensure that spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills are developed through all parts of the school day. They offer learning tasks which make pupils excited and fascinated about the world; help them to understand right and wrong; build friendships; and develop respect and tolerance for others.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils make good progress and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. This is because their work is exciting and focused on topics that they enjoy.
- Pupils in Year 1 develop their skills in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) well. In 2014, they achieved levels above those nationally in the Year 1 phonics check.
- In 2014, pupils in Year 2 achieved above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Year 6 pupils also reached standards which were well above the national average in English and mathematics in 2014. The school has focused successfully on improving rates of progress for all pupils, including the most-able pupils.
- Pupils in all classes enjoy reading, talk enthusiastically about what they have read, and know how to use books to find information. Many of the exciting topics in school grow out of pupils' favourite books.
- High-level skills in English and mathematics are reflected in pupils' workbooks and school tracking data.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because work in lessons and results from assessments are used to check on how well they are learning and to adapt their tasks whenever necessary. Although most-able pupils progress very well overall, their progress is uneven in some classes because they are not provided with sufficient challenge.
- There were too few pupils who received support from the pupil premium in 2013 to be able to compare

their achievement with their peers in school and those nationally in English and mathematics.

The early years provision

is good

- Children join the Nursery with skills and knowledge which are generally in line with those typical for their age. Interesting and exciting learning activities in the classroom, outside and in the very cosy 'house' in the playground help them to make good progress.
- Learning is based on exciting topics which grow out of stories and nursery rhymes. This makes learning enjoyable and helps children to reflect upon the world around them.
- Some of the children who join the Reception class have not attended the Nursery, and staff ensure that they assess their skills carefully and plan work to help them to catch up.
- Staff in the Nursery and Reception have a clear understanding of what pupils can already do so that their new learning in each area builds upon this knowledge and helps them to work as partners with others or independently.
- Staff help children to make friends and build strong relationships. Children make good progress because they settle to their work happily and their behaviour and attitudes are good. They make friends and grow in confidence. Parents contribute to assessing their children's starting points and support their learning.
- Leaders know the strengths of the Nursery and Reception class because they check carefully how well children are doing and what needs to improve. Systems to track children's progress and to plan new learning are effective in supporting progress.
- Children make good progress and enter Year 1 with an excitement for learning and skills and knowledge which are above average.

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	104198
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	444054
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Thorley
Headteacher	Stuart Cox
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 July 2010
Telephone number	01922 743498
Fax number	01922 745240
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