

Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School

Brixham Road, Reading, RG2 7RB

Inspection dates 3–4 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- The school has made impressive and rapid improvement since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' achievement and behaviour and standards of teaching have all improved markedly and all areas for improvement have been fully addressed.
- Leadership at all levels, including governance, is good. The headteacher's determination to raise standards is shared by all staff and is recognised as successful by parents and carers and the local authority.
- The quality of teaching is now good. Teachers have high expectations and plan thoroughly, ensuring that pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well.
- Pupils' achievement is good. From starting points that are below those typical for their age, pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress. Their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is close to the national average by the end of Year 6.
- Standards in reading are high and parents are encouraged to read with their children and to support their learning.
- From the time they enter the school, pupils' social skills are fostered well and they develop good attitudes to learning and to each other.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They behave sensibly inside the classroom and outside. Those pupils who have difficulty in managing their behaviour are supported well so that they can focus on learning and improving their progress.
- The early years provision is good. The Nursery is rightly praised for the quality of the experience that the children receive. This is maintained in the Reception Year where children are well taught, preparing them well for the next stage in their education.
- Pupils are well looked after and safety is a high priority; pupils learn to keep themselves safe from an early age.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Pupils do not spend enough time studying the arts, computing and languages. This narrows their range of experience and makes the transition to secondary school more difficult.
- The quality of teaching is not yet of sufficient quality to enable all pupils to make rapid progress.
- Some pupils in Key Stage 2 lack the skills of comprehension to ensure they fully understand the meaning and context of their reading.
- Teachers' marking does not always show pupils how they can improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning in 25 lessons, one jointly with the headteacher. They also saw pupils working in small groups and individually with teaching assistants and other adults.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, senior leaders, a group of governors, a representative of the local authority, the mathematics consultant, the special needs co-ordinator, middle leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors took account of 34 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. They also had informal discussions with parents and took account of staff questionnaires.
- The school website and a range of policies and documents were reviewed, including the school’s improvement plans, governors’ records and safeguarding policies and procedures. Attendance and progress records were also examined.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ work in lessons and discussed it with them. Groups of pupils met inspectors and talked about their work and their experience of school. Samples of books from different groups of pupils were considered. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 6 read to inspectors and talked about their reading.

Inspection team

John Worgan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Viner	Additional Inspector
Julie Quarrell	Additional Inspector
Alison Nettleship	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- Whitley Park is a much larger-than-average primary school, catering for children aged from three to 11 years.
- In the early years, over 100 children are taught in part-time Nursery groups. Thereafter, they are taught in three full-time Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average. This is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils who are eligible for school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- Just over half the pupils come from White British backgrounds. The remainder of the pupils come from a wide range of ethnic groups and some speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the curriculum by broadening the range of pupils' experience in the arts, languages and computing so that pupils spend more time studying these subjects and are better prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding so that all pupils make rapid progress by:
 - developing the comprehension skills of pupils so that they fully understand the context and meaning of their reading
 - improving marking so that pupils have precise guidance on improving their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and her senior team have placed a high priority on raising achievement and promoting high-quality teaching. This has resulted in a significant improvement in standards of achievement and the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.
- Leaders expect high standards and all staff are determined that children will achieve well. This is reflected in the good standard of work and positive attitudes to learning of pupils.
- High standards of behaviour are expected. An effective behaviour management system, which is understood and respected by pupils, has ensured that standards of behaviour have improved and are now good. Effective systems and support ensure that those pupils who have difficulty managing their behaviour are encouraged to focus on learning.
- Information on pupils' progress is collected regularly and analysed carefully so that the needs of individual pupils and groups are met through careful planning. Parents are well informed about their children's progress and attendance at parent consultation evenings is high. From the early years, parents are encouraged to contribute to their children's education and this is reflected in their contribution to the children's 'learning journey' folders.
- Middle leadership is effective. Subject leadership is good and year leaders take a strong interest in checking achievement and supporting the learning of pupils. Planning is cooperative and ideas and effective teaching techniques are shared.
- Teachers' performance is checked carefully and progress through the pay scales is linked to the quality of teaching. Teachers appreciate the ways in which leaders work with them to improve the quality of teaching. Outside consultants, working with leaders in school, have been particularly effective in raising the standard of teaching in literacy and mathematics.
- The substantial funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used very effectively to improve the achievement of these pupils and the gap between their performance and other pupils in the school is narrowing.
- Teaching has been effectively focused on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. This has resulted in limitations on the time and resources devoted to other areas of the curriculum, particularly the arts, languages and computing. This limits pupils' range of experience and makes transition to secondary education more difficult.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Pupils are introduced to British values through their topic lessons and have, for example, a good awareness of the concept of democracy. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Sports premium funding is used to employ a specialist sports teacher and two teaching assistants who deliver lessons of good quality, working alongside class teachers to improve the teaching of physical education.
- Leaders ensure equality of opportunity and that discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds get on well and the few racial incidents that occur are dealt with effectively.
- The local authority has a very high opinion of the school and the way in which it has improved since the previous inspection. It has provided effective support in this time but now correctly believes that the management have a strong capacity to improve independently.
- Parents are supportive of the school and almost all who responded to the Parent View questionnaire were positive in their views. Attendance at parents' evenings is good.
- The arrangements for the safeguarding of children and the safer recruitment of staff meet statutory requirements. Procedures are effective and staff are well trained in safety matters, ensuring that all pupils are safe and well cared for. A family support worker helps to ensure that vulnerable children are supported and kept safe.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an appropriate range of skills and support and challenge the school effectively. They are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation and have a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses.
 - Governors have a good grasp of data and the way in which it is used to measure performance and to set targets for teachers. They are aware of the standards required for teaching to be good and outstanding and ensure that teachers are rewarded for teaching well and that standards are checked carefully.
 - Governors consult with parents informally and through questionnaires and ensure that parents' views are taken into account.

- Governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met. They ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed when staff are employed. They check regularly that the premises are safe, that pupils are safe when they go out of school on visits and that staff are well trained in safe practice.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It has improved significantly since the previous inspection and pupils' attitudes to learning are now good.
- In lessons, pupils behave well, working together effectively and taking responsibility for their learning willingly and enthusiastically. Pupils report that the occasions when their lessons are disturbed by poor behaviour are rare and when incidents occur, they are dealt with effectively.
- Pupils behave well out of lessons, showing courtesy and consideration for others. They play together well, although the range of play equipment is limited for such large numbers of pupils.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and reached national average figures in 2014. The school is monitoring attendance carefully and a range of strategies is in place to encourage and support pupils whose attendance patterns give cause for concern.
- Pupils say that staff listen to them and consider their views. They are particularly complimentary about the support that they receive when they have problems and feel confident that they can seek help from teachers and support staff.
- Parents, in discussion and in the Parent View questionnaire, were positive about standards of behaviour and the care that their children receive.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Children are well aware of how to keep themselves safe and behave safely. From the time they enter the nursery, they are taught to use equipment safely and to be considerate to others when moving around both inside and outside.
- Bullying is rare. The occasional incidents that occur are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils understand about the different forms of bullying and know, for example, how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- A small minority of parents felt that the school could deal more effectively with bullying. Inspectors' examination of school records showed that cases were investigated thoroughly and appropriate action taken.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Consequently, achievement has improved rapidly. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds now make good progress.
- Teachers' expectations are high and pupils respond accordingly. Classrooms are welcoming and well equipped. In each classroom, a large 'ladder' on the wall enables pupils to see the progress that they and others are making; they enjoy and appreciate this visual guide.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. The subject leader has worked with an external consultant to raise standards of teaching and to ensure that teachers incorporate the increased demands of the new National Curriculum in their teaching. Pupils enjoy mathematics and are proud of their achievements. In one lesson, for example, a group of higher ability pupils was responding enthusiastically to the challenge of reciting the 17-times table. They moved on swiftly to a problem-solving exercise involving sharing chocolate bars fairly in a range of different ways.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is of high quality. Pupils are taught in groups appropriate to their reading ability and this is having a positive impact on standards of reading.
- Pupils read well and enjoy reading. Pupils with weaker reading skills are supported well in individual or small-group reading sessions. The teaching of reading focuses on basic skills; the development of vocabulary and comprehension skills is less strong, consequently pupils do not always understand what they have read.
- Pupils are encouraged to learn about other cultures. During the inspection, pupils were learning about life in an African village and were enthusiastically drawing comparisons with their own experiences.
- The teaching of writing is improving. School information shows that pupils' spelling, punctuation and

grammar are improving and this is having a positive impact on standards of writing. Younger pupils are encouraged to write well from an early age and the teaching of writing in the Reception and Year 1 classes is of high quality. Teachers ensure that older pupils have opportunities to develop their writing in a variety of contexts. Inspectors saw good examples of longer pieces of writing by older pupils.

- Homework is set regularly and is marked and checked carefully, supporting improvement in pupils' progress.
- Teachers' marking is inconsistent. The best marking gives pupils clear guidance on improving their work but in some subject areas and in some classes, marking is confined to general comments.
- Teaching assistants play a key role in enabling pupils to make good progress. The school has placed a high priority on the training of teaching assistants, raising their level of skill and developing their expertise in specific areas. They are involved in planning and work with groups of pupils of differing abilities, matching teaching to pupils' needs and abilities. They play particularly key roles in the early years and in the teaching of physical education, where two specialist teaching assistants provide good coaching.
- The teaching of disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is of a good standard, which is ensuring that they make good progress and that the gap between their achievement and that of others in the school is narrowing.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement is now good and has improved rapidly since the previous inspection. Children join the school with skills and abilities at levels below those typical for their age and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is improving and moved closer to the national averages in 2014. This represents good progress from their starting points.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment has been below the national average in previous years. Results improved in 2014 and data for the current school year indicate that pupils' attainment continues to rise in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils leaving the school in 2014 had made good progress during Key Stage 2. School data indicate that pupils have made even better progress this year.
- The most able pupils are progressing well. A good proportion of these pupils in Years 5 and 6 are working towards the higher National Curriculum levels in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is good. Results in the Year 1 phonics check have improved and are now close to the national average. Although reading results at Key Stage 2 in 2014 improved, the proportion who reached higher levels was lower than in writing or mathematics, reflecting limitations in their comprehension skills.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is good. Pupils in the early years are encouraged to write well and inspectors saw impressive examples of pupils' writing in the Reception classes and in Year 1. In Key Stage 2, writing skills continue to improve and school information shows that more of the current Year 6 pupils are working at the higher levels. To further improve standards in writing and mathematics, pupils in years 4 and 5 need to be given higher level tasks so that they are able to progress from a higher base in Year 6.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally was two terms in reading, writing and mathematics. In comparison to other pupils in the school, disadvantaged pupils were about one and a half terms behind in each of reading, writing and mathematics. The school's current progress data show that gaps between disadvantaged and other pupils are narrowing rapidly in all year groups. Disadvantaged pupils are now making good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Provision is of very high quality and includes specialist speech and language therapists and a family worker who works closely with families and children using a range of programmes of support. A wide range of support programmes is coordinated by the special educational needs coordinator who ensures that the effectiveness of these programmes and the progress of every pupil on the special educational needs register is monitored and well supported.
- Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well. Those at an early stage of learning English receive additional support individually and in small groups, consequently they catch up quickly and are able to access the full curriculum.

The early years provision**is good**

- Children make good progress from their starting points, which are sometimes very low. Many join the setting with skills at levels below those expected for their age. Those children who join the Nursery make excellent progress from a low base and have overcome many of their barriers to learning so that by the time they join Reception, they are ready for the new challenge, with the majority at age appropriate expectations.
- Highly effective systems for the early identification of children with special educational needs ensure that effective and timely interventions are accurately targeted and lead to good progress so that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Children have a rich, engaging experience across all areas of learning, with activities that are carefully planned to hold their interest. There is a good balance of activities that children can select for themselves and those that are led by adults.
- Children have a range of opportunities to develop their reading and writing. Phonics is taught well and children make good progress. By the end of the Reception Year, children's literacy and numeracy skills are well developed, preparing them well for the next stage of their education.
- Adult-led activities are based on their good knowledge of individual children and ensure that each is challenged appropriately. This leads to children who are keen learners who listen carefully to adults and follow their guidance.
- Children behave very well; they play together without disagreement and learn to respect each other's difference. Children in the early years feel safe, valued and special.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because it is sometimes variable in quality in the Reception classes and some adults do not have enough knowledge of how children learn. Nevertheless, teaching over time is consistently good and leads to good and better outcomes.
- There are strong partnerships with parents who contribute to the assessment of their children's starting points and are kept well informed of the progress throughout their time in the early years. Parents speak positively about the school and value the progress their children make and how happy they are.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the provision and plan accurately for its further development. The early years leader is highly knowledgeable and has worked with external consultants to develop extremely effective systems of tracking and assessment. She has an ambitious vision for the setting and is driving rapid improvement.

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	136512
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	462647

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	630
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Dunnet
Headteacher	Karen Salter
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 December 2013
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