

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs O'Shea-Warman  
Headteacher  
Whitchurch Community Primary School  
School Road  
Whitchurch  
Devon  
PL19 9SR

Dear Mrs O'Shea-Warman

### **Short inspection of Whitchurch Community Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 26 January 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in January 2011.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

You and the governors believe strongly that the social and emotional well-being of the children comes first and, as a result of this, the children want to learn. Your vision is shared by staff, pupils and parents. A parent wrote, 'our children are happy and contented at the school and being taught to be well-rounded citizens'.

Together with the other senior and middle leaders, you have developed an extensive curriculum that interests the pupils and develops their knowledge and understanding of the world. It includes opportunities for pupils to learn beyond the classroom, for example through trips, competitions with other schools and visitors to the school. You also provide a wealth of opportunities for the pupils to take responsibilities, as in the house captains organising fund-raising activities. The impact is evident in the pupils' positive attitudes to learning, their regular attendance and good behaviour.

The positive relationships and supportive ethos of the school lead to staff morale being high. The staff feel well supported by the effective policies and systems which the leadership team has developed, including the procedures for their performance management and training.

A strength of the leadership of the school is the way in which responsibilities are shared across senior and middle leaders. This inspires the key stage teams of staff to continue to improve their provision, although it does mean that outstanding practice is not always shared throughout the school.

Since the previous inspection, you have continued to improve pupils' progress and have developed teachers' use of information and communication technology to engage pupils in lessons. In particular, interactive whiteboards are used well to demonstrate the standard of work expected of the pupils.

Through robust self-evaluation, you and the leadership team identify any areas of underperformance. You hold pupil progress meetings with the staff which result in providing extra help where it is needed. The impact is seen in the recent rise in the number of children in the early years reaching a good level of development, an improving trend in the Year 1 check in phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) and in pupils' progress in reading across the school, all of which are now above average.

Through effective teaching, pupils make good progress. Their progress is especially rapid at the end of Key Stage 2 due to the teachers' outstanding use of assessment strategies to check and extend pupils' understanding. You are aware that pupils' progress would be even better if this exemplary practice was shared across the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and the governors ensure that all statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met. You keep the governors and staff up to date with the latest requirements, as outlined in the Department for Education document 'Keeping children safe in education'. The requirements are reflected in your policies and procedures, which are reviewed annually. In line with safer recruitment practices, all the required checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are carried out and recorded appropriately. All staff are trained in safeguarding at the appropriate levels and their training is updated at the required intervals. This includes recent training in the risks of radicalisation. Where you have concerns about pupils, you make appropriate use of external agencies and follow up the outcomes robustly.

### **Inspection findings**

- Your accurate self-evaluation of the school's performance ensures that any areas for improvement are quickly identified and appropriate support is put in place. For example, you are taking effective action to improve pupils' learning and progress in mathematics. You also identified that children's progress in the early years was not strong in 2014, particularly for boys. You provided effective support to help the staff make better use of assessment to meet the individual needs of the children. The impact is seen in the increase in children, and

especially boys, achieving a good level of development – which improved to above the national average in 2015.

- Pupils continue to make good progress in reading and, in the Year 1 phonics check, they now attain above-average results. The pupils make steady progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and the start of Key Stage 2. Their progress accelerates at the end of Key Stage 2 so that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make at least expected progress in all subjects, and more than expected progress in reading. The most-able disadvantaged pupils are not making more than expected progress in writing and mathematics because the previous gaps in their learning were not addressed soon enough in the early years and in Key Stage 1. You have identified the need to start the support activities at an earlier stage of learning. The younger pupils often forget the new skills they learn in grammar, punctuation and spelling because they do not have enough opportunities to apply them independently in their writing.
- The rapid progress that pupils make at the end of Key Stage 2 is due to the teachers regularly checking how well all pupils are learning during the lessons. The teachers skilfully use questioning and other effective strategies to extend the pupils' understanding. They set high expectations of what the pupils can achieve, based on their different starting points. They use their strong subject knowledge to challenge the pupils to think at a higher level. The pupils respond well to the feedback that the teachers give them, using it to improve their work. However, not all teachers are equally skilful in checking and extending pupils' learning.
- In order to continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning, you are rightly developing the skills of subject and special educational needs leaders. These middle leaders accurately check pupils' progress through observing lessons, examining pupils' books and progress information, and in discussions with pupils and staff. They use the information to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As they work within their subject or phase teams, however, there is no clear sharing of the best practice throughout the school, for example in the use of assessment strategies.
- The senior leadership team has developed effective systems and procedures, including for performance management, to support the staff in their work. Leaders have also enriched the curriculum with visits and clubs that interest the pupils and make a very strong contribution to their personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents appreciate the extensive range of extra-curricular activities on offer, especially in the performing arts and sport. You have employed a sport apprentice who has increased the range of sport provided for the pupils and who is developing teachers' skills. As a result, an increasingly large number of pupils participate in the many opportunities for sport that the school offers.

- Due to the engaging curriculum, effective teaching and good attention given to pupils' personal development, behaviour and well-being, pupils are eager to learn. Their attendance is above average and they behave well. To address the previous few incidents of bullying, leaders have increased opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities such as play leaders, and introduced some more lunchtime clubs. Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to deal with unsafe situations, for example in using the internet and social media. As a result, pupils say there is very little bullying in school, that they feel safe and are confident that staff would address any concerns that they may raise.
- The governors have an in-depth knowledge of the school through monitoring your detailed school improvement plan and the pupils' progress information. They regularly visit the school to see for themselves the quality of teaching and learning. They keep you on your toes by asking pertinent questions, such as how the pupil premium funding is making a difference for the disadvantaged pupils. Through well-targeted support, the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of others nationally and in-school is closing rapidly, except for the most able. Governors support the school well.
- As a member of the Tavistock Cooperative Trust, you draw on the resources in a range of Trust schools, such as for sport, to good effect and use your own school's expertise to support other schools within the Trust. The local authority maintains an overview of the school's performance. It has rightly judged that the school needs little support.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- pupils, including the most-able disadvantaged pupils, make consistently strong progress throughout the school, especially in writing and mathematics, by:
  - sharing the best practice in teaching, particularly in checking and extending pupils' understanding in lessons and in feedback on pupils' work
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills independently, including in the early years and in Key Stage 1
  - identifying who will lead on developing teaching and learning across the school and how this aspect will be developed.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Devon County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

I wish you continuing success.

Yours sincerely

Sue Frater

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, other leaders, members of the governing body and a group of pupils. I spoke with an officer from the local authority on the telephone. I also spoke with pupils around the school and examined the quality of their work, especially in English, mathematics and science.

I visited all classes with you and the mathematics subject leader. We discussed our joint observations of teaching and learning, pupils' attitudes and their progress.

I examined a range of documents, including your self-evaluation form, school improvement plan, and records relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour, the performance management of teachers and the local authority's evaluation of the school's performance. I took account of the 89 responses to the online Parent View survey and three responses to the online questionnaires from staff and two from pupils.