

Whitegate Primary and Nursery School

Middlefell Way, Clifton Estate, Nottingham NG11 9JQ

Inspection dates

7–8 October 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, although securing some improvement since the last inspection, have not made sure that achievement and teaching have improved to become good.
 - Middle leaders do not check if everything is working well in their areas of responsibility. They do not have enough influence on driving improvements.
 - The progress of pupils is not consistently good across all subjects.
 - Pupils' punctuation, grammar and spelling skills are not taught well enough across Key Stage 2.
 - Teaching requires improvement because some groups of pupils are not making the best progress they could in writing and mathematics.
 - Teachers do not always plan work or explain tasks clearly to meet the needs of all pupils. Work lacks challenge for some and is too hard for others.
 - Pupils do not have enough opportunity to write at length or in different styles across a range of subjects.
- New governors do not have all the skills they need to challenge and support school leaders in their bid to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- A strong community ethos permeates all the school does. The headteacher has a strong vision for the school and has secured the confidence of staff. Morale is high. Staff promote trusting relationships with pupils. Parents are highly supportive of the leaders and staff.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) has significantly improved and is good. Pupils across the school enjoy reading.
- The headteacher has created a welcoming and orderly atmosphere in the school and pupils enjoy coming, as shown in their improving attendance.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are respectful towards each other. They behave well and are knowledgeable about staying safe.
- Provision for children in Reception and Nursery is good. Children are taught well and make good progress from their varying starting points because of stimulating activities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better to secure good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 by making sure that:
 - the good practice that exists in the school is used to help teachers develop the skill to adjust tasks in lessons so that all pupils receive work which is appropriately challenging
 - teachers have sufficiently high expectations of pupils, especially the most able
 - pupils have more opportunities to practise basic literacy skills by writing at length and in different styles in English and other subjects
 - teachers have a secure understanding of how to teach basic punctuation, grammar and spelling skills
 - teachers give clear explanations using probing questioning to check pupils' understanding
 - teachers provide suitable resources to support independent learning, particularly in writing.

- Increase the impact of leadership and management on accelerating school improvement by:
 - ensuring senior leaders develop a greater thoroughness in their monitoring activities
 - developing the role played by middle leaders in supporting and challenging their colleagues
 - ensuring governors gain the skills they need to challenge and support the school in improving.

An external review of governance should be undertaken so that this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders do not ensure pupils' progress is consistently good. Weaknesses in teaching and learning are identified, but leaders are not relentless in making sure that teachers improve their practice swiftly.
- The headteacher has created a caring environment where everyone feels valued. Staff share his vision for the school and are confident in his leadership. Pupils and parents welcome all the changes that have been made.
- Presently, too much responsibility rests with the headteacher and deputy headteacher for leading improvement. Middle leaders, some new to their posts, have not fully developed their skills to check on pupils' learning and drive the improvement in teaching and learning. They have not made sufficient impact on the outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders are too positive about what they see in classrooms and the work pupils produce. They do not make full use of the information about pupils' progress to check if it is good enough over time. Consequently, the view of teaching in the school is too generous.
- Although the school's self-evaluation is overoptimistic, leaders know where improvement is needed. The headteacher has clear aims to strengthen teaching and accelerate progress but the rate of improvement has been too slow. The strong practice that exists in parts of the school is not used sufficiently to help all teachers improve their skills quickly.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported through carefully managed provision for their needs. There are secure procedures for identifying pupils who need extra assistance, and a good range of links with other professionals so that teachers and pupils benefit from specialist help.
- The pupil premium funding is used to good effect. The school has taken positive steps to improve the way that additional funding is used to quicken the progress of disadvantaged pupils, and gaps are closing.
- The curriculum is planned to provide a focus on the development of reading, writing and mathematics. All subjects are covered, but not always in sufficient depth. The school can demonstrate that the use of topics engages pupils in their learning. A range of after-school clubs, visitors and visits enhance the curriculum well. Year 2 pupils were particularly enthused about their visit to a sea-life centre during the inspection, and this was used to promote animated discussion and descriptive writing.
- A structured approach to the teaching of mathematics has been introduced across Key Stage 2 this academic year, but it is too soon to measure its impact on rates of progress. However, the structured approach supporting reading, writing and spelling introduced last year across Key Stage 1 is improving rates of progress, with more pupils reaching age-related expectations. The drive to improve the teaching of phonics has been successful and for the last two years the proportions of Year 1 pupils reaching the required standard have been above average.
- The school promotes British values through its focus on tolerance and respect for each other and people of different faiths. Pupils in Year 6 learn about political systems and rights and responsibilities. There is an elected school council and pupils are taught about democracy and the rule of law, which prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Assemblies focus on ethical issues and the values needed for society. Parents are invited to the 'Star of the Week' assembly, which celebrates and recognises pupils who have demonstrated one of the school's core values towards others.
- The primary school sports funding is used well to improve training and to provide specialist sports clubs, such as for Taekwondo. More pupils are now involved in sporting activities and competitions. Some older pupils, who took part in the National Junior Championships for Taekwondo in London earlier in the year, were awarded gold and bronze medals.
- All parents spoken to praised the improvements the headteacher has made. They were highly positive about the calm, welcoming atmosphere of the school, its approachability and all it provides. They value the regular information shared by teachers through the school electronic 'Marvellous Me' system and the termly parent consultation evenings. The school also makes sure that parents are well informed through regular newsletters, the school Twitter account and the informative school website.

■ The governance of the school

- brings a wide range of skills to help support the school. Governors are committed, supportive and generous with their time but a number of governors have recently joined and are inexperienced. Regular visits ensure that they are familiar with the school while it is in session and staff attend governing body meetings to share information about the curriculum.
- gets regular updates on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. However, governors have limited understanding of school assessment information when comparing school standards and progress to groups and other schools locally and nationally. Governors have not challenged senior leaders sufficiently well about pupils' progress in each year group and by the end of Key Stage 2. They have an inaccurate view of achievement and teaching.
- knows that through the performance management system teachers are now held to account for the achievement of pupils in their class. Governors understand that where targets are not met teachers will not receive a pay rise.
meets its statutory responsibilities and has managed school finances well. Governors monitor the pupil premium funding, but do not go far enough in questioning the impact of this funding on disadvantaged pupils' progress.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school has robust and effective policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety of pupils, and these are implemented well. The school works well with parents and families and timely action is taken to report any concerns and to involve outside agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching over time requires improvement. It is still too variable to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- In some classes, pupils are not challenged effectively by the tasks and questions that teachers set. Not all teachers take good account of the information available from the school's regular assessment of pupils' progress. This means that some activities do not meet the needs of all pupils. The most able are not challenged sufficiently and work is too hard for others.
- Sometimes the tasks teachers want pupils to complete are not explained clearly enough, leaving pupils unsure what to do. Pupils are not always provided with sufficiently helpful resources to support their learning and enable them to work on their own.
- Leaders have introduced a good system for marking pupils' work since the previous inspection. Teachers are working hard to follow the guidance consistently and to mark work in line with the school's policy. Marking is done regularly, makes a useful contribution to pupils' learning and pupils usually act upon it. However, not enough emphasis is placed on correcting pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to write across subjects, or at length, and this slows the development of writing.
- Although teachers are giving pupils more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to problem-solving activities, overall their expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. The recently introduced structured scheme for mathematics, used across Key Stage 2, has started to improve the consistency of teaching. Pupils particularly enjoy the online activities and homework linked to the scheme.
- Reading skills, especially phonics, are taught skilfully from an early age and this helps pupils to read unfamiliar words accurately. A structured support scheme has also been introduced to help older pupils who need more help to acquire good phonic skills. As a result, pupils quickly develop the skills to read texts that are appropriate to their ability.
- There is a whole-school approach to the presentation of work, which is good across the school. From an early age pupils' pencil grip is corrected. Pupils are taught correct number and letter formation, leading to neat cursive handwriting in Key Stage 2.
- Teaching assistants provide helpful support and guidance to pupils, particularly disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Good use is made of well-targeted interventions for both literacy, numeracy and social skills to help pupils with specific needs, and this enables them to learn well in these sessions.
- There are positive, supportive working relationships between pupils, parents and staff. Parents are very

positive about the communication between home and school and the approachability of all staff.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils understand the importance of a good education and are confident and proud of their school. They take a pride in their work and feel valued and well looked after. The vast majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and all parents spoken to confirm their children are happy at school, are well cared for and enjoy learning.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and visits to the school by the emergency services and other outside agencies have raised awareness about personal safety and how to seek help if necessary. Those who talked to inspectors were aware of potential dangers and knew various ways that they could manage risk, including when using mobile phones and computers online. There are open, trusting relationships across the school and pupils are confident that they will be helped if they have a concern.
- Pupils are well supervised at all times and there are thorough risk assessments for activities both on and off the school site. All staff receive training to ensure that they can recognise signs of possible abuse and welfare concerns. Communication between leaders and all staff coming into contact with children is strong and there is effective liaison with child protection partners when required.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and that adults deal with any poor behaviour effectively. The school teaches the motto 'Say No, Go Tell' as a means of teaching pupils how to tackle any forms of bullying. The school records and analyses all incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Leaders respond quickly to any incidents, treat them seriously and put the right steps in place to improve the behaviour of any pupil involved.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They conduct themselves sensibly when moving around the school, are well mannered and responsible, and show consideration and respect for others. They are highly aware of the school's core values and know that these help to make the school a happy and safe place for them to learn. This is confirmed by responses and comments from both staff and parents. One parent commented, 'I moved my children here from another school where they were unsettled and unhappy. Since they've been here they love coming to school and their learning has absolutely taken off. It's an amazing place!'
- Pupils have positive relationships with their teachers both in and out of lessons. They respond quickly to their teachers' instructions and need very few reminders about how to behave in lessons. Consequently, very little lesson time is wasted due to unacceptable behaviour and pupils show a good attitude to learning.
- The work done with parents since the previous inspection has improved attendance, which is broadly average and improving. The school works hard to make sure that pupils arrive on time for school. The school follows up absence and lateness very carefully and has well-established systems in place to check on them. Persistent absence has been significantly reduced. The breakfast club and the work of the attendance officer have contributed to raising attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The progress of pupils across each key stage requires improvement because it is too variable. There are too many differences in the quality of teaching to secure pupils' good achievement.
- The proportion of pupils making expected progress and reaching the expected level of attainment by the end of Year 6 is average, indicating that they are adequately prepared for their move to secondary school. However, too few pupils make more than expected progress compared with national averages.
- The proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels in reading and writing at the end of both key stages are below the national averages.
- A whole-school focus on strengthening basic mathematical skills, using the 'maths drills', means that pupils are starting to recall number facts more quickly and are beginning to solve mathematical problems more confidently. However, due to previously weaker teaching, progress in this aspect of mathematics is still too variable across the school.
- Pupils' progress in writing is improving but pupils do not have a sufficiently secure grasp of basic punctuation, grammar and spelling skills, and this is hindering their ability to write fluently. There are too few opportunities for them to practise basic skills by writing in different styles both in English and other subjects.
- Pupils' progress in reading is showing signs of improvement but there is still variation between year groups. A greater emphasis on reading for pleasure is strengthening pupils' enjoyment of reading. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils spoke enthusiastically about the newly refurbished library and the improved choice of books. They said they especially enjoy reading stories as they, 'take you out of this world and help you feel part of the story'. They named a number of favourite authors and explained how they got new ideas and vocabulary from books which they could use in their own work. Younger readers successfully use their phonic knowledge to help them read unfamiliar words.
- For the last two years, the proportions of Year 1 pupils reaching the required standard in the national phonics check have been above average. Improvements in the way phonics skills are taught mean that pupils are making better progress in applying this knowledge to early reading and writing skills.
- The gap in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils at Key Stage 1 is showing signs of narrowing this academic year, especially due to the structured approach to the teaching of phonics, reading and writing skills.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 2 tests in 2014 was above others in school for mathematics and in line with other pupils in the school for reading and writing. In 2015, tests attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils was in line with others in school. The attainment gap with other pupils nationally is continuing to close. The recently appointed teacher with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs checks their progress and liaises with teachers to ensure pupils' needs are met in the classroom and through additional intervention groups. As a result, pupils who need extra help with their learning make progress in line with that of their classmates.
- Looked after children make good progress, appropriate to their abilities, due to the high priority and care that leaders and teachers place on this group of pupils.

Early years provision

is good

- When children join the Nursery, personal and social skills and communication are weaker areas of development. Leaders and teachers keep detailed computerised records tracking achievement and these give them a good understanding of what each child needs to make good progress.
- Carefully planned activities ensure good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. The proportion of the Reception children attaining a good level of development has increased over the last two years and is now in line with the national average. Children are well placed to continue their good start in Year 1.
- There is an appropriate focus on developing basic literacy and numeracy skills, and additional intervention is given to disadvantaged children. Most disadvantaged children make good progress from their varying starting points, and gaps in their attainment with the other children are closing.
- There has been a renewed focus on the teaching of phonics this year and it is taught well. Children enjoy making the sounds and building words. All of this helps them to pronounce and spell words accurately,

and it supports early reading and writing skills.

- The early years provision is led and managed well. Children have a rich, engaging experience across all areas of learning, with activities that are carefully planned to hold their interest. During the inspection, children were learning about different senses and enjoyed tasting and describing different flavours of jelly. Next they followed instructions and were excited about making a jelly.
- The behaviour of children is good and teachers have established routines and expectations for behaviour which are evident even early in the school year. Children listen well and engage in activities because they have good relationships with each other and adults alike. On a few occasions, a small minority of children call out answers instead of waiting their turn, or chat to their friends when the teacher is talking. This behaviour is managed well by adults.
- Staff ensure that children are safe and well looked after. Good links are established with parents prior to their children joining the school. Subsequently, parents are encouraged to have a positive involvement with their child's learning, sharing home activities and attending regular 'stay and play' sessions.
- Leaders have set up effective systems for the early identification of children with special educational needs to ensure that effective and timely interventions are accurately targeted and lead to good progress. In this way, children are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

School details

Unique reference number	122739
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10001808

This inspection 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	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Les Sullivan
Headteacher	Lee Noble
Telephone number	01159 152944
Website	http://www.whitegateprimary.co.uk/
Email address	headteacher@whitegate.nottingham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 September 2013

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British families.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and receive 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 and children who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club.
- A number of teachers and governors are new to the school since the previous inspection. Some middle leaders have been in post a relatively short amount of time.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, covering all classes. Eight were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors also observed group work and listened to pupils read. They observed pupils at play, at lunchtime and during a whole-school assembly.
- Inspectors carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work in their writing and mathematics books and looked at the learning journals from the Nursery and Reception classes. They also gathered information from pupils' work displayed around the school.
- Discussions were held with the senior leaders, members of staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Pupils' views were gathered through informal discussions with pupils at break times and also through discussions with two representative groups of pupils. Some parents and carers were interviewed as they brought their children in to school.
- A wide range of documents was considered, including school and national information about pupils' progress; documentation relating to safeguarding arrangements; and school policies. The school's self-evaluation was also examined.
- Inspectors considered 28 parental responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, in carrying out the inspection. They also checked 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lindsay Hall, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lindsay Alldis	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Watkins	Ofsted Inspector

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