

# Whittingham Primary Academy

Higham Hill, Walthamstow E17 5QX

<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 July 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The executive headteacher, the multi-academy trust, the local governing body and other leaders have worked extremely well together to secure significant improvements in pupils' achievement, personal development and welfare.
- The capacity of leaders at all levels is strong. The trust capitalises on using the best practice to improve the quality of leadership, teaching and learning across the three schools.
- The school has some outstanding features. These include the quality of leadership and management, the provision in the early years and the promotion of pupils' welfare and behaviour.
- Pupils are exceptionally polite and respectful. They are encouraged to always consider their own and others' behaviour and learning, as reflected in the school's ethos of being a 'thinking' school.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Staff plan work that is precisely matched to pupils' needs. Pupils make rapid progress in their writing. The teaching of reading consistently secures strong outcomes. A new scheme for mathematics has been introduced which is securing good progress.
- Most subject leaders are key drivers for success. They plan and implement relevant actions to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Children in the early years make phenomenal progress in all areas of their learning, particularly in their communication and language. This is the bedrock for their outstanding achievement in other areas, and especially so in their literacy and mathematical development.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Assessments are not sufficiently focused on what pupils know and understand in mathematics. Hence, the most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in their thinking.
- Other ability groups are not always supported effectively in mathematics due to inconsistencies in the quality of guidance given to them.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to deepen their mathematical and scientific understanding and skills through problem solving and investigative work.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that progress in mathematics and science matches that in reading and writing and in all year groups by:
  - deepening pupils' scientific and mathematical skills and understanding through further opportunities to problem solve and investigate
  - sharpening up assessments in mathematics so that all pupils, including the most able, are sufficiently challenged to think hard about their work
  - providing consistently effective feedback to pupils in mathematics on how they can improve their work, including accurate identification of any errors in pupils' understanding.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The executive headteacher is inspirational and has demonstrated determination and highly skilled leadership in addressing previous inadequacies in the quality of provision. She has successfully gained the support and trust of the whole school and developed a culture of high expectations.
- She is exceptionally well supported by other leaders of the trust. Equality of opportunity and inclusion are given the highest priority for both pupils and staff, as both leaders and teachers unswervingly focus on securing the very best for all pupils, irrespective of their background, ethnicity or ability. Pupils from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds work and play together in harmony. Leaders reflect a strong commitment to making Whittingham an outstanding school. As a result, much has been achieved since the school converted to an academy and has become part of the multi-academy trust.
- A central aspect of the trust's work is the strong collaborative working between the three schools. Highly effective senior leaders are crystal clear about the school's effectiveness, using all available evidence from systematic monitoring of the school's performance. They make sure that there is a concerted effort to improve key areas of the school's performance, particularly the role of middle leaders, and to strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. School expertise is also used by the local authority, including the excellent inclusion work across the trust.
- Leaders and teachers work closely together in regular professional development meetings to secure at least good and increasingly outstanding teaching and learning. Staff professional development and training is shared effectively across the trust. Effective practice is used well for those teachers who need additional support, particularly those who are inexperienced and new to teaching. The school has faced some challenges recently in high staff turnover. A small minority of parents expressed concerns about this to inspectors. In the short term this has affected the quality of teaching. However, the flexible deployment of staff across the trust to secure consistently effective teaching has enabled the school to drive forward to secure continuous improvement. Equally, the recruitment of specialist teachers for some subjects including physical education (PE) and art, and a continuous cycle of support and training, means that those new to the school are quickly performing well. Staff morale is high, as reflected in the staff survey.
- Senior leaders are outstanding role models for middle leaders. Potential leaders are quickly identified and supported by their senior colleagues through carefully planned coaching and mentoring. Middle leaders are instrumental in making sure that the school continues to improve at a rapid rate. Their plans are well focused on what needs to be achieved next, as they are well informed by their regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning. This provides the framework for the type and depth of training and support individual teachers need to improve their teaching, as well as setting individual targets for improvement within a yearly cycle. The success of their work is clearly evident in the outstanding achievement in the early years and in English, for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. Some middle leaders are relatively new to their roles, most notably in mathematics and science. The new mathematics leader has a proven track record of securing rapid improvements, being the mathematics leader at one of the other schools in the trust.
- Leaders have a thorough understanding of the school's performance, including how well pupils are achieving. They use this information well to focus on key priorities. The school's assessment system is linked effectively to the curriculum. Teachers have a good understanding of the age-related expectations in the national curriculum. Senior leaders make excellent use of this information to regularly check pupils' progress. Appropriate support is put in place where pupils are working below the standards expected for their age.
- The curriculum is well planned to meet the interests and needs of pupils. A thematic approach provides a relevant and stimulating context for pupils' learning. The school's focused approach on improving pupils' understanding in phonics (letters and the sounds that they make), reading and writing is paying dividends. Specialist PE teaching is used highly effectively to improve pupils' skills, stamina and general well-being. The school's extensive extra-curricular opportunities enrich the curriculum well, including art and cookery. Opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical reasoning through investigative work and in problem-solving situations in science are not as well developed.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Pupils learn about a wide range of cultures and world faiths. As a thinking school, all pupils, including the 'Thinking Council' are encouraged to look after each other at all times, to think critically and creatively, as well as to work with others and to value their views. First-hand observations throughout the inspection established that pupils put much of this into practice on a daily basis. Behaviour logs confirm that this is the norm.

- The pupil premium funding is spent well. As a result, pupils entitled to pupil premium demonstrate outstanding progress in English and good progress in mathematics. Where required, they receive additional support through a range of well-focused strategies.
- The additional funding for sport and physical education has enhanced provision for all pupils. Two specialist teachers lead on the teaching and learning. They provide training for their colleagues to improve their practice. This, together with additional sports equipment, has increased pupils' participation levels. Observations show that pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons, which has a positive impact on their physical and mental health.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Trustees and the local governing body share the passion and commitment of leaders to ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential. They are highly strategic and driven to continuously improve and to expand so that as many pupils as possible flourish.
  - Members have a wide range of relevant skills and experience to make sure that school leaders are both well supported and challenged in equal measure. They are well informed about the school's performance. They receive regular updates from the executive headteacher and middle leaders. They commission external consultants to validate school information and judgements, so that they are not over-reliant on leaders' information. Some trustees and governors are linked to specific areas, including safeguarding and inclusion. They make sure that all the statutory requirements for safeguarding are fully met.
  - Trustees and governors ensure there are robust procedures in place so that leaders can hold staff to account for their performance. They know how the pupil premium funding has been spent and its impact. They are justly proud of the performance of disadvantaged pupils. Members have ensured that finances are managed well.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The welfare and safety of pupils is paramount and everyone understands that it is their responsibility to protect all pupils. Training is up to date, including how to identify, deal with and report all forms of potential abuse and dangers including extremism, female genital mutilation and domestic violence.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** is good

- Teachers plan activities that engage pupils in their learning. Their subject knowledge is secure in mathematics. Teachers model learning effectively using visual prompts to support pupils when they are learning new concepts. As a result of the recent implementation of a mathematics scheme, pupils learn a wide range of topics in this subject. This develops their fluency in their calculation skills well.
- However, pupils' learning is not always routinely assessed in lessons. This means that some pupils, including the most able pupils, complete work they can already do. Rather than being challenged to deepen their knowledge through problem solving and investigative situations, particularly in science, they are usually given similar activities to complete. As a result progress is not as rapid as it is in English.
- Inconsistencies in the quality of feedback in mathematics result in a lack of clarity as to what pupils need to work on next in order to improve further. Furthermore, feedback does not consistently identify misconceptions in pupils' understanding. As a result, this slows down the rate of progress in this subject for all ability groups, including the most able pupils.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge in writing. They have exceptionally high expectations for all ability groups. Teachers know what skills pupils need to develop, practise and apply in order to be successful and confident writers in a range of different styles. Planning provides clear progression of skills, which are taught systematically. As a result, pupils accurately check what progress they have made which is carefully monitored by their teachers. There is consistency in teaching, learning and assessment which leads to outstanding progress.
- Phonics is now taught rigorously, so that pupils are fluent and confident readers and writers. The school library is well stocked and inviting. Pupils told inspectors that they love reading. They read with excellent comprehension skills and could talk about the characters and their intentions. The most able pupils are suitably challenged through higher-order texts, developing their ability to infer and reason well. This, together with a concerted focus on developing pupils' communication and language skills, including regular opportunities to debate, has significantly raised achievement in reading.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is outstanding**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Developing pupils' ability to reflect on their learning and behaviour results in confident, responsible and mature learners. Pupils are highly motivated and resilient learners, which has a strong impact on their learning.
- Pupils have great respect for all adults and for their friends. Relationships are strong and supportive. Pupils greet visitors with a warm welcome because this is modelled by staff and because they are exceptionally proud of their school. When asked by inspectors how the school could be improved they could not think of a single thing.
- Pupils feel very safe. If they have concerns they know that they can talk to an adult or post their concerns in the class worry box. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and secure. They know the rules to protect themselves from any online risks. Older pupils understand about the dangers posed by radicalisation and extremism. Pupils say that there is no bullying in school and if there was, then they know that it is their responsibility to stop and report it.
- Pupils' physical and mental welfare is one of the top priorities of the school. Pupils know how to keep healthy and are encouraged to make the right choices about healthy eating and taking regular exercise. A specialist therapeutic social worker is on hand to support potentially vulnerable children and their families. Staff are vigilant in identifying any issues and use the school's child protection policies consistently to make sure intervention and support is swift and appropriate. The school works closely with external agencies to make sure that any pupils at risk of potential harm are reported and followed up appropriately.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils work hard and this has a strong impact on their learning and progress. They work collaboratively together, and are very self-disciplined. Case studies confirm that adults are very effective in securing sustained improvement in the behaviour of a small minority of pupils who have specific behavioural and learning needs.
- Pupils' conduct is almost always faultless because adults have high expectations for behaviour and manners. Incidents of low-level disruption are rare and generally occur when teaching fails to engage pupils fully.
- Attendance rates have improved over time and are now above average for all groups of pupils.

## Outcomes for pupils **are good**

- Overall attainment has risen rapidly at the end of each key stage and at the end of the early years. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2016 was well above the national average for 2015.
- Almost all pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, with at least one in four exceeding this in Year 2. Given the higher expectations of the new curriculum, this represents good progress in mathematics and rapid progress in English, from previous low levels of attainment when they entered Year 1.
- Pupils' reading skills develop quickly as a result of recent improvement in phonics teaching. This year, just over four in five pupils achieved the expected standard in the phonics check. This is higher than the national standard in 2015.
- Similarly, the latest tests and teacher assessments confirm that Year 6 pupils achieved much higher standards than the national averages in 2015 in reading and mathematics, and in the teacher assessments for writing.
- Work in pupils' books establishes that most pupils make outstanding progress in writing. Both school information and observations at the time of this inspection also confirm that progress in reading has improved significantly for all groups of learners.
- An in-depth analysis of pupils' learning in their mathematics books, and observations of learning in lessons, confirm that most groups of pupils make good progress in this subject, from Year 1 to Year 5. Achievement in science is not as strong as in English, with too few opportunities for pupils to work scientifically.
- Although there are some inconsistencies in the progress different groups of pupils make in the core subjects, there are no discernible patterns. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language and disadvantaged pupils do as well as, and sometimes better than, other pupils in the school. Well-above

average attainment for most groups also means that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as, if not better than, all pupils nationally.

- Pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils because leaders and teachers check individual progress and identify potential underachievement quickly. Intervention strategies are put in place, including adult support and guidance, to help pupils in their learning. Nonetheless, those pupils who find learning in mathematics difficult are not always provided with activities which build on what they already know and can do because feedback from teachers does not identify their misconceptions well enough in mathematics.
- The most able pupils also make similar progress to other groups of pupils. The school has successfully addressed the lack of challenge for these pupils in reading and writing. However, their progress is not rapid in mathematics because they are not challenged to move on to harder work and to apply their thinking in problem solving and investigative work, especially in science.

## Early years provision

## is outstanding

- In 2016 four out of five children achieved a good level of development. This is well above the 2015 national average. Increasingly, more children exceed the early learning goals, including in literacy and mathematics. From below-average starting points this represents outstanding progress for all children. They are exceptionally well prepared for the challenges in Year 1. Assessments show there is little variance between the progress that different groups make. Previous gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils, and between boys and girls, have been closed.
- The early years leaders have an excellent understanding of how young children learn. Assessments are ongoing and thorough. This ensures that children learn through activities which stimulate their curiosity, challenge their thinking and secure sustained concentration and perseverance. This attention to detail means that all adults are highly attuned to individual children's needs and abilities through meticulous observations and assessments which are used to plan for children's next steps.
- The quality of teaching and learning is regularly checked. Adults act on the feedback given and this secures consistency of approach, as well as equality of opportunity, for all children, who benefit from outstanding provision in both Nursery and Reception. Staff benefit from a wide range of professional development activities based on leaders' monitoring of their strengths and areas for improvement.
- Careful analysis of how well children learn means that underachievement is picked up quickly with appropriate support put in place to speed up their progress. The recent focus on developing children's communication skills has ensured that all children, including those who speak English as an additional language and/or disadvantaged children, are able to communicate effectively. This has a significant impact on children's ability to think and reason and to access all areas of learning exceptionally well.
- Improvements in the outdoor provision have been a key factor in speeding up children's progress. Children learn and play in areas outside which promotes their learning just as well as in the classrooms. There are numerous opportunities for younger children to develop dexterity and confidence to make marks in a wide range of materials. Older children write in sentences independently using their phonics skills to spell simple words.
- There are well established systems in place to enable staff to forge a strong partnership with parents, including those who speak English as an additional language, through regular informal discussions to workshops. Parents are highly appreciative of the school's work.
- Adults secure a nurturing and exciting learning environment which celebrates individual identity, diversity and collaboration. Children learn and play exceptionally well together in a safe and secure environment.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139317
<b>Local authority</b>	Waltham Forest
<b>Inspection number</b>	10010967

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	456
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The academy trust and local governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sylvia Harper
<b>Executive headteacher</b>	Patricia Davies
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8523 3228
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.whittinghamprimary.org.uk">www.whittinghamprimary.org.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:Office@whittingham.waltham.sch.uk">Office@whittingham.waltham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	N/A

## Information about this school

- Whittingham Primary Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school. It is one of three schools which form the Silver Birch multi-academy trust. The executive headteacher is also the chief executive officer of the trust. The primary school converted to academy status in February 2013.
- Pupils come from a range of different ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups are of Asian and White British heritage.
- Nearly two thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is well above average.
- A third of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is also well above the national average.
- Recently there has been a high turnover of staff, including several teachers.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities is above average; the majority of these have speech, language and communication difficulties or moderate learning difficulties.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in lessons across all year groups including in the early years. Most of these were joint observations with school leaders. The work in pupils' books was evaluated during observations. Pupils' progress and attainment was judged from an extensive book scrutiny. Inspectors also examined the school's achievement information. Inspectors also heard pupils read.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with several middle leaders and members of the trust including the chair of the multi-academy trust, and the chair of the local governors of the school. Inspectors also met with several groups of pupils and spoke to them informally throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the 13 parental views expressed through the Parent View survey. Inspectors also spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors reviewed the 28 staff questionnaires returned during the inspection.
- The inspection team also looked at records relating to behaviour and attendance, and looked at documents used by leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's work. A review of safeguarding records and procedures was carried out.

## Inspection team

Mary Hinds, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Calvin Henry	Ofsted Inspector
Olivia Cole	Ofsted Inspector
Nicholas Turvey	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Jaeggi	Ofsted Inspector



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