

Whitchurch Primary School

22 Bristol Road, Whitchurch, Bristol BS14 0PT

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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

- Standards of work in reading, writing and mathematics are not high enough. Too few pupils are reaching the standards expected of them, including the most able pupils.
- Activities planned are not sufficiently well tailored to meet the needs of low-attaining pupils or those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The quality of teaching, especially in reading and mathematics, is not consistently good. Pupils do not possess a secure understanding of key skills in these subjects by the time they complete key stage 2.
- Too few pupils in Years 3 and 4 have strong comprehension skills.
- Pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics are not sufficiently developed.
- Historically, the views of leaders, including governors, of the quality of teaching, have been overly optimistic. Consequently, outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are not yet good.
- Previously, leaders' monitoring has been slow to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching.
- School leaders do not communicate clearly enough with parents about the actions they have taken to improve behaviour or about the impact they have had.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders, including governors, now have a comprehensive and accurate understanding of the school's work and effectiveness. As a result, outcomes for pupils across the school are improving rapidly.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are developing an effective senior leadership team which is now strongly focused on key priorities.
- Pupils are polite and make a positive contribution to the school. They are respectful towards each other and are typically supportive of each other in lessons.
- Leadership in the early years is effective. Consequently, children enjoy a positive start to school and are well prepared for key stage 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To improve the quality of teaching, assessment and outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - work set by teachers is accurately matched to pupils' needs, especially the lower-attaining pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able pupils
 - pupils' comprehension skills in reading, especially as they move through Years 3 and 4, are developed securely
 - pupils can use and apply their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management, including governors, further, by ensuring that:
 - improvements in leadership and in teaching are closely targeted on underachieving groups
 - all groups of pupils are supported to meet national expectations by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics
 - parents understand fully strategies to improve behaviour and the impact they have had.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders, including governors, have raised standards at the end of the early years foundation stage in key stage 1 tests and in the phonics screening check. They have acted quickly to tackle the weaknesses in the 2016 key stage 2 reading and mathematics results.
- The deputy head has implemented an effective system for checking the progress of pupils regularly. As a result, any pupil who is identified as falling behind is provided with carefully considered actions to support them in their learning. This well-targeted and planned support is helping pupils to catch up quickly.
- Teachers are held effectively to account for the rates of progress their pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders scrutinise pupils' ongoing assessment information and challenge staff, through these professional conversations, to improve their performance. Agreed actions link to the school improvement priorities closely. As a result, the quality of teaching is now improving rapidly across the school.
- The teaching of reading and grammar is improving as a result of effective partnership working with a national leader of education (NLE). School leaders use professional development and training opportunities effectively to target priorities.
- Subject leader roles are developing well. English and mathematics subject leaders now make a valuable contribution to driving improvements. They check the progress of the school's improvement priorities and hold other leaders closely to account for pupils' progress. As a result, targeted pupils are now making strong progress to catch up.
- School leaders are beginning to make more effective use of funding to support interventions for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are checking more carefully on the effectiveness of activities intended to help this group of pupils. Despite this recent improvement, planning and teaching are not yet good enough to secure good progress overall and the achievement of this group remains a priority for the school.
- Leaders are developing the school's broad curriculum effectively. For example, school visitors add a variety and breadth to the pupils' experiences and enjoyment.
- School leaders promote British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They plan activities so that pupils can have first-hand understanding of how social and moral issues affect them. For example, Year 6 pupils discuss children's rights and responsibilities. As a result, pupils show understanding and an appreciation of complex moral issues and dilemmas.
- Historically, leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching and outcomes have been premature in judging these to be good. However, evidence now shows that accurate and regular checking is successfully securing improvements, for example in the early years in phonics and in writing.
- Parents' overall confidence in school leaders is qualified by some concerns about how well school leaders tackle and eradicate any instances of bullying. Leaders are keenly

aware of this. They accept the need to communicate better with parents the good work they are doing to improve behaviour, including to tackle any instances of bullying, and to allay any concerns that parents may have.

- The day-to-day promotion of equalities in the school is a strong feature of the school's work. Pupils feel well supported to mix freely with each other and participate fully in all events and opportunities on offer to them.
- External advice has been well received and used by the school. The work of the NLE in particular has been a positive and influential factor on improving the quality and recent impact of leadership at the school.
- The local authority has provided appropriate training opportunities for school staff. However, in checking the school's progress since the previous inspection, some evaluations have contributed to an overgenerous understanding of the school's position in terms of the standards pupils reach.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is now holding leaders effectively to account. Since September 2016, records of governors' visits, with their recommendations, have been more efficiently recorded and used to ensure that they have a stronger impact on the work of the school. The governing body is actively involved in setting performance targets for the headteacher and senior leaders. It checks and monitors progress against these targets regularly and uses them as effective and clear milestones of improvement.
- Governors were disappointed and 'surprised' by the 2016 key stage 2 reading and mathematics results, but immediately took action to tackle the weaknesses they revealed. Their actions have been effective in setting renewed and clearer expectations in the school development plan, which are used to review and check the school's progress. As a result, governors now have a well-informed view of key strengths and weaknesses. Previously governors had been too quick to judge teaching and pupils' outcomes as 'good' when they were not.
- Governors ensure that the spending of the additional funds for disadvantaged pupils, including for children in the early years, is fully accounted for and directed towards a suitable range of activities for these children. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils generally compares well to other (non-disadvantaged) pupils.
- Governors delegate the sports and physical education funding appropriately. This contributes to high-quality additional coaching for games, as well as towards further swimming lessons. As a result, pupils' participation in sport is high and they leave the school able to meet the expectations of the national curriculum, for example, swimming 25 metres by the end of Year 6.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The culture for safeguarding pupils is strong. The high degree of vigilance ensures that staff are aware of potential hazards, risks and concerns. They know how to report and escalate concerns and are tenacious in working with other agencies to keep children safe.
- During the inspection some details had to be followed up as administrative records and

the school's safeguarding policy did not contain all required information. This was quickly rectified by school leaders.

- Staff have a secure understanding of what to do if they suspect a child is at risk. They know who the lead officers are and how to report concerns via the school's formal recording process. The headteacher keeps accurate and timely records of all incidents relating to pupils' welfare. Case studies show that these are referred to the appropriate agencies swiftly.
- As a result of regular training, staff are aware and well informed. Leaders check that supply and cover staff, or those new in post, are fully aware of the school's procedures and know how to register and escalate any concerns. New staff confirm this is part of their induction.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not helped pupils make rapid enough progress. Pupils are not moved on quickly enough in their learning when they have grasped concepts. As a result, pupils sometimes 'tread water' and do not make as much progress as they are capable of either in the short term or over longer periods of time.
- In some instances work can be too challenging or, at other times, not sufficiently difficult to ensure that pupils make strong progress over time. This is particularly the case in mathematics for low-attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is not sufficiently secure to present challenges to pupils which allow them to apply their mathematics skills in a range of situations. As a result, teaching does not stretch or deepen pupils' understanding, in particular for the most able mathematicians.
- The teaching of reading is improving significantly and additional interventions are effective in identifying pupils with particular needs and targeting necessary support. However, pupils' comprehension skills are not secure, particularly in Years 3 and 4, so they do not understand a variety of texts and written information well enough.
- Teachers' consistent application of the school's approach to improving writing is enabling pupils to learn and use more complex grammar. As a result, pupils are enjoying writing with increasing confidence and skill, and outcomes in writing are improving rapidly.
- Teachers know most pupils' academic needs well and are challenged through conversations with senior leaders to ensure that targeted pupils can catch up. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in lessons and also in the delivery of additional support. Nonetheless, pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities are not yet making consistently good progress.
- Adults' questioning is a strength and pupils are typically challenged to find answers for themselves. As a result, pupils are increasingly confident and self-motivated in their work.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and generally take pride in their work. There are some occasions, however, when they are less careful than they could be with the presentation of their work.
- Pupils show respect and care towards each other. The school ensures that there is a range of opportunities for pupils to make a valuable contribution to the school community. For example, pupils have been democratically elected to be a voice for the other children through the school's 'equalities team' manifesto.
- Pupils show a strong awareness and understanding of the needs of others. At play times, pupils mix well and move freely together. A small number of pupils who responded to the inspection survey expressed concerns about bullying.
- School leaders are aware of pupils' concerns and have implemented effective anti-bullying strategies. Pupils value and have responded well to initiatives such as 'anti-bullying' week. Nonetheless, leaders acknowledge that they need to do more to communicate the positive impact of this work to both pupils and parents.
- The school environment is used well to promote British values, including fostering respect and tolerance. This helps to raise awareness of issues and prejudices in society, and to challenge these. Pupils celebrate events from all major faiths and understand why these are important to individuals and society.
- Pupils' personal development is also enhanced by the range of sporting and physical opportunities open to them. These include a Jamaican dance festival, whole-school athletics, multi-sports, football, netball and cricket. Pupils learn to participate in team events, which supports their social and emotional development.
- School leaders have actively secured additional support from a local sports charity as part of a range of actions to raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem. This initiative is helping pupils to feel included and learn self-management strategies to cope and respond appropriately in a variety of social situations.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are well prepared for lessons and generally work well together. They show good attitudes to learning for the most part. However, on rare occasions pupils can become distracted or lose interest if the lesson is not fully holding their attention. In these situations, they lose learning time and their progress slows.
- Pupils confidently told inspectors that they feel the school has improved and that a significant part of this is because teachers understand them and respect their opinions.
- The school environment encourages pupils to show respect and behave well, and therefore pupils are keen to look after it. They speak fondly of the 'graffiti corridor' and the various displays about books and reading which have motivated them.
- Local writers and musicians have also been used to raise pupils' interest and motivation

through various workshops and assemblies. As a result of these, pupils have a stronger connection with the local community and understand how they can contribute towards it, for example by raising money for charities.

- The headteacher monitors behaviour and has set clear expectations for what will not be tolerated. As a result, incidents recorded in the behaviour log, which are closely checked and recorded, show a decline in high-level referrals.
- Leaders take a strong stance on attendance. They do not authorise holiday requests. In addition, they have been proactive in finding interesting ways to raise attendance. Although the school's absence is higher than the national average, including for some vulnerable pupils, this is improving. Leaders show tenacity and perseverance on behalf of the pupils by insisting on good attendance at all times.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Standards attained by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics are still too variable, especially lower-attaining pupils who need to catch up. In addition, the proportions of the most able pupils meeting the higher standards expected of them are not high enough, particularly in key stage 2.
- The progress of lower-attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been too slow in reading, writing and mathematics. However, work in these pupils' books shows that they are now catching up and a greater proportion are on track to meet national benchmarks and school targets.
- Disadvantaged pupils typically outperform their peers and are making at least the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders monitor this group's achievement closely and intervene if there is a risk they might lag behind. For example, they are currently monitoring potential underachievement among this group in Years 2 and 5.
- Pupils' progress in reading reported at key stage 2 national tests in 2016 was significantly below the national average. Current analysis of pupils' work, listening to them read and checking the school's own assessment information, shows that pupils are now catching up. However, some pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not show secure comprehension skills.
- In 2016 pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 in mathematics was below the national average. Work in pupils' books shows that there are limitations to pupils' wider mathematical skills and reasoning, which is a barrier to them attaining the expected standards. For example, older pupils' work is limited in the development of skills and understanding in areas such as geometric reasoning, algebra, direction and ratio and proportion.
- Writing at the end of both key stages 1 and 2 in 2016 compared well to the national average. Standards in writing across the school continue to be strong as skills are developed well across the curriculum.
- Outcomes in national tests at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 for reading, writing and mathematics compared well to the national average. The results of the Year 1 phonics screening check have improved over time and in 2016 were above the national figure.

- Pupils' understanding in subjects other than English and mathematics is strong. They are able to relate their skills and knowledge to different contexts, for example, practising writing in science or as historians in a second world war topic. As a result, pupils' thinking and reasoning skills are developing well and promoted effectively across the curriculum.

Early years provision

Good

- Over time, children's development is strong and the standards they reach have been above the national average by the time they leave the Reception Year. Children are ready for Year 1 and are typically showing strong personal, social and emotional skills, as well as well-developed reading, writing and physical development.
- Staff get to know the children very well from the earliest opportunity and adapt resources to meet particular needs. Consequently, children make good progress across the curriculum. For example, children practise saying their letters and sounds into telephones to rehearse clear pronunciation of letters and the sounds they make.
- Teaching is effective in promoting children's personal, social and emotional development. Children are curious and use the well-designed resources and provision to move freely between different activities and experiment with ideas. They are keen to explore the world around them and apply their knowledge and skills in a range of contexts and situations.
- Children are supported and trusted to work safely and they make the right choices, such as using scissors sensibly to cut sticking tape when making birthday cards.
- Staff have high expectations of the children and are keen to ensure that they are exposed to age-appropriate content as soon as possible. For example, all children are involved in working with numbers up to 20 and counting back in ones. Lower-ability children are well supported by additional adults, enabling them to succeed.
- The most able children, including those eligible for additional early years premium funding, are challenged effectively to develop their understanding of complex sounds.
- School leaders have identified key priorities for further development, which include enabling younger boys to catch up more quickly, especially in relation to their personal, social and emotional development.
- School leaders ensure effective transition into the early years through home and pre-school visits and enable parents to immediately become involved in assessment. Consequently, the school promotes effective relationships with parents and local early years providers.
- The school uses parental information and observations to inform its own assessment information. As a result, children benefit from activities in school which are directly informed by experiences at home.

School details

Unique reference number	109073
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	10021332

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Dyer
Headteacher	Carl Hornsby
Telephone number	01275 833593
Website	www.whitchurchprimary.co.uk
Email address	whitchurch_pri@bathnes.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 January 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of information on its website.
- Whitchurch Primary School is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary.
- There are fewer girls than boys in the school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than the national average.
- The proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.
- The school is continuing to receive support through its link with a national leader of education (NLE).
- The school meets the current government floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classes, accompanied by either the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders for mathematics and English, the special educational needs coordinator and representatives of the school's governing body, two representatives from the local authority and a national leader of education.
- The inspectors scrutinised a number of documents including local governing body minutes, assessment information, the school's self-evaluation, governors' monitoring visits, the school development plan, records of the performance of staff and evidence relating to safer recruitment and child protection.
- The inspectors undertook a joint scrutiny of pupils' books with the senior leaders to evaluate the quality of work and check the accuracy of assessment information held by the school.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils throughout the inspection, and one inspector met with pupils from key stages 1 and 2. An inspector also heard pupils of different ages and abilities read, including the most able pupils and those in receipt of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at playtime, lunch and in the breakfast club.
- The 66 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account. The inspectors also considered comments provided alternatively, such as meeting directly or via letters. The online responses of 16 staff and 26 pupils were also considered as part of the inspection evidence.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Martyn Groucutt

Ofsted Inspector

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