

Whitehouse Community Primary School

Marlow Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 5JN

Inspection dates

8–9 March 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils make inconsistent progress in their learning. Standards by the end of key stage 1 remain low.
- Leaders have not done enough to promote the progress of boys, especially those of low or middle ability and those who are disadvantaged.
- Until recently, the school has not had a robust system for checking pupils' progress from their starting points.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. Some pupils are not challenged enough to do better.
- Leaders have not ensured that there is consistently accurate identification of, or effective support for, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Gaps in the curriculum mean that pupils have not been developing all the skills they need to make good progress, not only in English and mathematics but also in other subjects.
- In some classes, pupils are not given enough time to write at length and teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation are not high enough.
- Pupils' correct use of spelling, punctuation and grammar varies. This is especially true of younger pupils.
- A small number of pupils do not behave or attend as well as they should. Leaders have not ensured that these pupils' behaviour improves quickly enough.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is consistently well provided for.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She is working successfully to bring about necessary improvements.
- Governors and other leaders, at senior and middle leader level, understand their roles and responsibilities well. They are increasingly effective in their work.
- Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy lessons. They are happy and safe.
- Pupils are making good progress in carrying out mathematical calculations quickly and effectively.
- Children in the early years get a good start to their education. The Nursery and Reception classes are lively, and children enjoy learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment and progress by ensuring that:
 - all teachers plan learning that is sufficiently challenging
 - leaders promote consistently good or better progress for boys, especially low and middle attainers and those who are disadvantaged
 - teachers in all classes link assessment more closely to what pupils should know, understand and can do and use this effectively to inform teaching
 - staff give pupils enough time to develop their writing skills and to practise writing at length
 - pupils are taught to spell more effectively and to use punctuation and grammar correctly
 - all teachers have high expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attendance by:
 - ensuring that the small number of pupils who do not behave as they should do so
 - continuing to focus rigorously on pupils' attendance and working with parents so that it improves at a rapid rate.
- Improve leadership by ensuring that leaders:
 - implement new plans for the curriculum quickly and effectively
 - accelerate their work to implement the system to analyse progress over time
 - develop a strategy to enable them to accurately identify, and effectively support, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is consistently well provided for
 - update the school's website to include all of the necessary information.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The leadership and management of the school require improvement because the curriculum and systems for assessment have not been developed effectively enough. In addition, leaders have not promoted equality of opportunity well enough for all pupils in relation to their learning and achievement.
- Leaders are working intensively to close the gaps in the curriculum. However, underachievement in some subjects remains. In English, for example, there has not been enough focus on developing skills to help pupils to analyse the texts they are reading to gain deeper understanding and meaning.
- Evidence from work in pupils' books indicates that the range and depth of work in subjects such as science, history and geography are largely limited to acquiring knowledge. Skills such as those related to enquiry and investigation are not systematically built into teaching plans.
- Leaders have not ensured a systematic approach to promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, while pupils develop a good understanding of different cultures and faiths, a small number are not as reflective about the consequences of their behaviour as they could be.
- Until recently, leaders have not had a consistent system in place to help them to analyse pupils' progress. As a result, leaders have lacked a precise understanding of the achievement of different pupil groups. Leaders now compare the performance of different groups of pupils, such as girls and boys and those who are disadvantaged. However, this approach has not been in place long enough to have had a significant impact on the progress some pupils make.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities requires improvement. Sometimes pupils who get left behind in their learning are incorrectly identified as having special educational needs. The process for assessing whether pupils who speak English as an additional language have special educational needs lacks precision. As a consequence, funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not spent as well as it could be.
- The headteacher and her leadership team have quickly and precisely identified the areas in which the school needs to improve. They have swiftly established a culture of high expectations and are holding teachers more clearly to account for the progress that pupils make. The robust school development plan accurately identifies what needs to be done to improve the quality of education provided.
- In the time that the headteacher has been in post, considerable work has been done to establish effective systems and procedures to manage the school's work. New curriculum plans are being developed to ensure that skills across all subjects are systematically taught.

- Leaders in English and mathematics are doing good work to identify gaps pupils have in their skills, knowledge and understanding so as to help them to catch up and accelerate their progress. Senior leaders are supporting other subject leaders to develop their roles and provide more effective support in, and monitoring of, their subjects.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupil premium funding has been used efficiently in the past to help raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Making use of the guidance provided in the recent external review, leaders are now making more effective use of this funding. For example, they are targeting funds carefully at improving behaviour, attendance and learning for disadvantaged pupils.
- There is no evaluation report on the use of the sports premium funding for last year. The current headteacher has considerable expertise in sports education and how to make best use of the funds. The current plan is thorough and shows clearly how the money is being spent effectively.
- The local authority has been working with leaders for 18 months. It has provided effective training and advice to enable governors to develop their skills further. Local authority staff are supporting the current headteacher well.

Governance of the school

- Governors recognised that the school needed to improve and that there were weaknesses in leadership. By working closely with the local authority, governance has improved and is now good.
- Governors have good knowledge and understanding of the school's work. Governors receive good-quality information from the headteacher to help them to check the school's performance, including the quality of teaching. They ask pertinent questions in order to hold leaders to account for the school's performance.
- The governing body is now involved effectively in identifying priorities for development and in checking how well leaders are progressing towards key targets in the school development plan. Even though the headteacher has only been at the school for just over two months, governors have already set appropriate targets for her performance.
- Governors visit the school regularly to find out for themselves how well their policies are being implemented. They have been involved in developing the new behaviour policy and have a programme for reviewing the effectiveness of other key policies.
- Governors pay good attention to the future development of the school while ensuring that its appointed leaders are dealing effectively with improving teaching and raising performance. Governors acknowledge that the pupil premium funding was not well used last year. They now have a precise understanding as to how this funding is being spent and why it is being used in this way.

Safeguarding

- Safeguarding is effective and is given a very high priority within the school. The school has a positive ethos of care, and staff are vigilant when it comes to pupils' safety and well-being.

- Records have been reorganised recently so that information about pupils for whom concerns have been logged is now well maintained. Work needed to support individual pupils, or follow up with external agencies and professionals, is carefully tracked to ensure that the required actions are taken, and in a timely fashion. Staff are persistent in pursuing concerns with social services and other agencies to keep children safe.
- The headteacher has increased the number of staff who are designated as safeguarding leads. She has ensured that they have received the appropriate training to prepare them for this role. Training for other staff is effective and they know the signs that indicate that a child may be at risk of neglect or abuse. They understand their responsibilities and know what to do if they have any concerns. Records show that staff exercise these responsibilities well. The school's family liaison officer works closely with families and pupils who need additional help to provide effective nurture and support.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable across the school. Some teachers have been hindered by the lack of effective assessment criteria to help them to pitch work at the right level. For example, some teachers provide appropriate criteria for pupils' learning and development during lessons. However, in other classes, these criteria include superficial learning rather than the focused development of deeper understanding.
- Some teachers do not challenge pupils, including at times those who are most able, well enough in lessons to work at a level that is appropriate for their ability. In some cases, higher-attaining pupils in key stage 2 are not routinely encouraged to read books that are sufficiently challenging.
- Teachers are not delivering key skills in English and mathematics systematically or making sure that pupils practise these regularly across the curriculum. In addition, some teachers do not provide pupils with frequent enough opportunities to develop investigation and enquiry skills in subjects such as science and history.
- Teachers do not deploy teaching assistants consistently well in lessons. Consequently, some pupils in need of support either do not receive the help they need or receive too much help. Where practice is strongest, teachers explain to teaching assistants carefully what they want them to do and the questions they need to ask pupils to help promote their learning.
- Some teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation. The work of middle- and low-ability boys in particular is often poorly presented, with handwriting that is not neat or formed well.
- Phonics is taught effectively across early years and key stage 1. As a result, pupils across the school learn to read competently in terms of recognising words and working out how to pronounce new or unfamiliar words.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to explain the work clearly to pupils and, when necessary, go through tasks carefully to show pupils how it should be done or give them an example to work from. Teachers also give pupils time to discuss their work in pairs or small groups so that they develop better understanding.

- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and this means that pupils readily ask for help when they need it. The atmosphere in many lessons across the school is good. In the majority of lessons, pupils focus effectively on their work and are keen to do well.
- Teachers help pupils to develop their skills in completing progressively more complex mathematical problems. Consequently, pupils become more confident, using a variety of methods, and are able to move on to more challenging work.
- Where practice is strongest, the productive working atmosphere and positive attitudes mean that the most able pupils often get a good amount of work done and move onto more difficult work. In these classes teachers use 'challenges', where they provide tasks at a range of levels of increasing difficulty. As a consequence, most-able pupils make good progress.
- Teachers are typically skilled in using questioning to help develop and extend pupils' learning as well as to check what they have learned. However, teachers do not consistently amend what they are doing in response to feedback from pupils following questioning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. This is because some teachers are not helping pupils who may lack confidence to take more initiative to promote their own learning. For example, in some classes, pupils are rarely given opportunities to ask questions or suggest what they could do to deepen their learning.
- Leaders have not ensured a systematic approach to promoting pupils' personal development, including their understanding of British values. Consequently, these are developed in a somewhat haphazard way. However, pupils' social skills are well established. The majority of pupils demonstrate good levels of respect for others, including those who come from backgrounds different from their own.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are equipped with the strategies to keep safe in a variety of settings, including when using the internet. Pupils explained that they could speak to any member of staff if they have any concerns. Pupils are also clear that bullying is not an issue in the school and that pupils have respect for differences such as race and gender.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. Parents responding to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, overwhelmingly agreed that their children are kept safe in the school and most felt that their children are well looked after. Staff are exemplary in the way they manage emergency situations.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions has been comparatively high, and a number of negative behaviour incidents have been logged during this academic year. The school

does not have a system for analysing these behaviour incidents to check for patterns and, therefore, to identify how to tackle and reduce the number of such occurrences.

- At times, a small number of pupils, often boys, behave in an immature way. Pupils told inspectors that this small number of pupils' 'silly' and 'irritating' behaviour sometimes slows learning. While behaviour was good in most lessons visited, inspectors saw examples of low-level disruption.
- Leaders have not ensured that there are consistently high expectations of how pupils should behave. For example, the school has not had a school-wide behaviour policy. Instead, each class has had its own class rules. Consequently, there has been no clearly understood mechanism for escalating persistent behaviour issues upwards for more senior staff to deal with. The new headteacher is already taking action to improve this situation.
- Pupils' attendance is lower than it should be. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is high. However, leaders have put in place a very robust system to follow up poor attendance. Staff make contact immediately if parents do not ring in to say why their child is not in school. These measures are already having a positive impact, but there is more to do to ensure that attendance levels improve.
- Pupils are generally polite and pleasant and get on well with one another. They enjoy school and most pupils have positive attitudes to learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils are not making consistently good progress as they move through the school. Boys, in particular low- and middle-attaining boys, are not progressing as fast as girls or most-able pupils.
- In 2016, pupils who took the key stage 1 tests attained results that were below the national averages, especially in reading and writing. The differences between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally remained wide. Some pupils did not make enough progress to catch up from their often low starting points.
- In 2016, pupils' achievement by the end of key stage 2 was below national averages. This was particularly the case for middle-attaining pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Middle-attaining boys and disadvantaged pupils did not make sufficient progress. Differences between disadvantaged pupils, especially middle-attaining disadvantaged pupils, at the school and those nationally remained wide.
- The performance of low-attaining pupils, including those who were disadvantaged, was inconsistent. The most able pupils all attained the expected standard in reading and writing and nearly all in mathematics, but fewer than nationally gained the higher standard.
- While pupils' attainment in phonics dipped below the national average in 2015, standards are rising. In 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening test was close to the national average. Pupils are now making good progress in learning letters and the sounds they make. By Year 2, nearly all pupils have met the expected standard.

- Inspection findings indicate that progress, although improving, remains inconsistent. Middle-ability boys, including those who are disadvantaged, progress less well than others. The standard of their work is not routinely high enough, especially in writing, including spelling and grammar. Similarly, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make inconsistent progress.
- Most-able pupils are often making better progress. Many are demonstrating good standards of work in English, and most in mathematics. However, their attainment and progress could be even better.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics requires improvement. Most pupils across the school are making good progress in developing their skills in tackling mathematical calculations. Pupils are beginning to gain confidence in explaining and reasoning out how they have solved problems, but they have not done enough work in this aspect of mathematics.
- An improved approach to teaching comprehension skills is helping pupils to develop the skills to analyse the texts they are reading in more depth. However, this approach has not been in place long enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress in developing their skills in comprehension.
- Pupils' progress in writing requires improvement. There are examples of good-quality writing, often completed by the most able pupils, where they write with flair and a mature choice of language. Many pupils demonstrate interesting ideas in their writing, but these are not always effectively expressed. Most pupils make good progress in learning to read effectively. Younger pupils, including the disadvantaged, make good progress in developing their knowledge of phonics to help them read new or difficult words.
- Pupils are making variable progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. They are making good progress in developing knowledge across a range of subjects in both key stages. However, they are not developing enough in-depth understanding across subjects such as science, history and geography or the skills of investigation and enquiry. Art and design work is developed well across the school and pupils make good progress and demonstrate flair and creativity.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in learning to communicate in English. Their progress in developing deeper knowledge, understanding and skills in reading and writing and mathematics is similar to that of other pupils and remains inconsistent.

Early years provision

Good

- Many children begin at the school with skills and knowledge that are significantly below those expected for their ages. They make good progress from their individual starting points as they move through the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been increasing over the last three years. In 2016, a slightly greater proportion of children achieved a good level of development than was the case nationally.
- The early years coordinator leads the area well and is supported very effectively by senior leaders. Leaders accurately assess children's progress and identify how well

each child is doing and what they need to learn next.

- Adults provide children with a wide range of practical activities that cover all the required areas of learning for children under the age of five. These activities are put together well and stimulate children's interests. Teachers also plan work effectively around children's individual needs. As a result, children engage in their learning well and make good progress.
- Children's learning journeys and books show that they are developing good skills in early writing and mathematical development. Leaders have focused on improving the opportunities for writing for all children and especially boys, and this is having a positive impact.
- Most-able children are supported well to help them to achieve beyond the good level of development. For example, an able boy was encouraged to think about simple subtraction because he had mastered simple addition and knew what 'one less' meant. Children's books show that most-able children, especially girls, are making rapid progress in writing.
- Disadvantaged children achieve well because they have access to a good range of resources which help to develop and widen their experiences and stimulate learning.
- Adults interact with children effectively. Teachers are skilled at asking questions that encourage children to think more deeply about their work and to extend their use of language.
- Teachers plan a good range of practical activities that help children who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language to participate equally. As a result, these children thrive and make good progress.
- Children are happy and safe. They enjoy their learning and most participate eagerly and enthusiastically with their learning. Children behave well. A few are easily distracted but staff refocus and re-engage them quickly. Staff take all the necessary precautions to keep children safe in the early years.
- The school has recently adopted an electronic system for recording children's work, and this is engaging parents well. Parents are able to comment on the work and upload any work their child does at home. The use of this system by staff is still being developed.

School details

Unique reference number	124660
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10023382

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	552
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Parker
Headteacher	Andrea Hall
Telephone number	01473 741249
Website	www.whcps.org
Email address	admin@whcps.org
Date of previous inspection	2 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about how the pupil premium was spent last year; how the primary sports premium was used; the impact of funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; or a behaviour policy.
- Whitehouse Community Primary School is much larger in size than other primary schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. However, nearly a third are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. About half of these pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. An above-average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs

or an education, health and care plan.

- The school meets the government's floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector has the discretionary power to inspect any school in England under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection began as a one-day, short section 8 inspection undertaken by an Ofsted inspector. During the first day, the inspector converted the inspection to a full section 5 inspection. The inspector was joined by four Ofsted inspectors on the second day to complete the inspection.
- The inspection team observed learning in all classes. A number of these observations were conducted jointly with either the headteacher or other senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team, subject and other middle leaders. They also met with a group of three governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also spoke to an officer from the local authority.
- Members of the inspection team spoke informally to pupils in lessons and around the school, as well as holding discussions with several groups of older pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading to check how well they were developing their reading skills. They also used the time to talk to pupils about their reading habits and their experiences and views of school.
- In carrying out the inspection, the inspection team took account of 35 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. Members of the team also spoke with parents as they dropped off their children at school.
- Members of the team observed the work of the school. They looked at the school’s improvement plan, a range of policies and procedures, documents relating to the work of the governing body and the arrangements for ensuring that pupils are kept safe. Documentation reviewed included records of assessment information relating to pupils’ attainment and progress, behaviour and attendance. The school’s website was also checked.

Inspection team

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Sandra Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Ladner	Ofsted Inspector
Kay Tims	Ofsted Inspector

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