

Whitkirk Primary School

Templegate Walk, Whitkirk, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS15 0EU

Inspection dates

3–4 May 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

- Outcomes have declined since the previous inspection. In key stages 1 and 2, pupils' progress, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able, is not consistently good in a range of subjects.
- Numerous staffing changes have contributed to a lack of continuity and have slowed pupils' learning and hampered school improvement.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of their pupils. They do not plan work which enables pupils to make the progress of which they are capable, especially the most able.
- Pupils do not apply their English grammar, punctuation and spelling skills well enough in subjects other than English, including science.
- Leaders, including governors, have not ensured that disadvantaged pupils are making the rapid progress required to catch up with other pupils nationally. The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not spent judiciously.
- The school's work to promote pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures is underdeveloped. As a result, pupils are not fully prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Despite an improvement in attendance overall, disadvantaged pupils' attendance lags behind that of other pupils in the school and nationally. This requires improvement.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are not robust. They do not outline fully the actions to improve teaching and outcomes rapidly. There are not clear enough measures by which leaders can evaluate progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Provision in the early years is effective. Leaders ensure that children get off to a good start in all that they do and are well prepared for Year 1.
- The leadership and teaching of phonics is effective. Most pupils reach the required standard by the end of Year 1.
- As a result of effective teaching and leadership, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well.
- Parents, carers and staff hold the school in high regard. They are supportive of the recently appointed headteacher and other school leaders.
- Most pupils behave well. They show respect and tolerance for staff and one another. Pupils are happy and safe because of the support they receive from adults.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and impact of teaching, learning and assessment on pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations are consistently high, especially for pupils who are disadvantaged and the most able
 - insisting that pupils apply their spelling and punctuation skills across all areas of the curriculum
 - developing the subject knowledge of teaching assistants so that they consistently provide pupils with effective support.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - sharpening plans for improvement to ensure that the impact of actions on teaching and pupils' outcomes are clearly established and measurable
 - checking the impact of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils more meticulously.
- Promote pupils' personal development and well-being so that they are at least good by:
 - improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to learn about the range of different faiths and cultures in modern Britain.

An external review of the use of the school's pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders' expectations over time have not been high enough. As a result, teaching and pupils' outcomes in key stages 1 and 2 have declined since the previous inspection.
- There has been a high turnover of staff since the previous inspection. Pockets of effective practice have not been embedded firmly and have not become part of the fabric of the school. As a result, this has limited the pace of school improvement.
- The steely determination of the very recently appointed headteacher has already won him the support of leaders, governors and teachers. As a result, they are unified and determined for outcomes to improve, especially in key stages 1 and 2. However, recent changes made to improve outcomes are at a very early stage of development.
- School improvement planning prioritises areas for development, including for disadvantaged pupils. However, the plans are not incisive enough on what needs to be done to raise the overall quality of teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress. In addition, there are insufficient measures by which leaders can evaluate progress.
- Procedures are in place to manage staff performance, and these include measurable outcomes for teachers to achieve. However, the plans lack detail. They do not make it clear what needs to be done in order for teachers to achieve their targets.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is effective. For example, pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. Pupils happily mix and socialise well together. Some pupils are not confident in their knowledge of different cultures and diversity in modern Britain. Opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures are underdeveloped.
- Pupil premium funding is not used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders acknowledge, quite correctly, that there is more to be done to check with greater rigour the impact of the funding on accelerating the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- The wider curriculum is not used consistently well to reinforce pupils' English grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. However, some topics enthuse pupils. For example, pupils enjoy meeting with local senior citizens, their 'silver friends'. They show respect for their elders.
- The local authority has provided a range of support in a bid to raise standards. For example, officers have worked alongside teachers to develop their skills and expertise. Due to staff turnover, the impact of this support has not been fully felt or embedded.
- The leadership of special educational needs is a strength. Leaders use the additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities appropriately. Personalised plans, together with closely targeted support, are helping pupils to make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment routinely. There are promising signs of early improvement, but teaching is not yet consistently good. Staff feel well supported to improve their teaching.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sports funding is used effectively. For example, teachers value the opportunity to build up their expertise in gymnastics

alongside specialist coaches. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, participate widely in extra-curricular activities, including athletics, football and boccia.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly aware that standards have not improved enough since the time of the previous inspection. They have taken bold action to strengthen the school's leadership. However, governors' actions have not yet secured the rapid progress needed at key stages 1 and 2, especially for the most able and disadvantaged pupils.
- The supportive governors are taking their own professional development more seriously. Following recent training, they have a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- Governors are now not afraid to ask searching questions. They learn first-hand about the life and work of the school through monitoring visits. Governors have ensured that safeguarding procedures are robust and pupils are kept safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders conduct the correct checks on staff and visitors in line with statutory requirements. The school site is secure, and procedures for managing visitors are robust. Risk assessments are firmly in place to keep pupils safe in school and when taking part in off-site educational visits.
- Staff are knowledgeable about their responsibilities to protect pupils from harm. Staff receive effective induction and training. This enables them to identify and share concerns appropriately. Staff have high levels of confidence in their learning mentors when cause for concern arises. Records indicate that staff act in the best interests of vulnerable pupils and put their needs first. Parents have access to a wide range of information, including details of external agencies should they need additional support. Pupils know that help is always on hand from adults, including learning mentors, should they have worries or concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Teaching has not been good enough over time to enable pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged, to make good progress in key stages 1 and 2.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve vary across classes and the curriculum subjects. They are sometimes too low. This is especially the case for the most able and disadvantaged pupils. Teachers do not insist that the standards of English grammar, punctuation and spelling seen in pupils' English books are mirrored in their work in other subjects such as science and history.
- The teaching of mathematics, while developing, still requires further improvement. In some classes, pupils of all abilities are starting to grapple with more challenging work and to solve problems. Leaders acknowledge that this is not yet firmly embedded to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress.

- The teaching of phonics has been reorganised to better meet the needs of pupils. The focus on early reading helps pupils, especially least-able pupils, to sound out unfamiliar words correctly. Pupils enjoy reading and are motivated by the range of books on offer. However, older pupils, including the most able, do not receive enough support needed to enable them to achieve more highly.
- Homework, which pupils complete regularly, is set on a weekly basis. Homework helps to consolidate skills well in mathematics and stimulate writing. For example, pupils in Year 3 wrote a short but exciting story about the Stone Age.
- Timely and effective support is consistently provided for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, these pupils achieve well. However, the subject knowledge of some teaching assistants requires improvement. This is particularly the case in supporting pupils in English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Teachers do not always make effective use of assessment information to provide work that meets pupils' needs. Some teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and, as a result, pupils, including the most able, become excited and thrive on the challenges set. However, this is not consistently the case, and this continues to hamper pupils' progress.
- Handwriting across the school is a strength. The school's coherent approach ensures that pupils from an early age join letters with care and take pride in their work.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They say that lessons are often fun. For example, pupils in Year 5 enjoyed devising a quiz to remember the order of the planets.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are variable from class to class. Some teachers' expectations of work in subjects other than English and mathematics are not high enough. Some pupils do not apply themselves as well as they could, producing untidy work that teachers accept.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of different faiths and cultures are limited. Pupils have some opportunities to mix with pupils from other schools, for example at an annual music concert. However, this work is underdeveloped across the curriculum and limits their preparation for life in modern Britain.
- The large majority of pupils play, learn and work together well. Pupils are kind to each other. They are tolerant and respectful of one another. Pupils value each other's individual differences.
- Pupils are happy and safe in school. The school's arrangements for meeting pupils' emotional and health needs are secure. Pupils report high levels of confidence in adults, including the work of learning mentors.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a range of different situations. For example, pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online. They know that bullying is wrong and are confident that adults deal with their concerns swiftly.

- Pupils understand the need to be fit and healthy. 'Fruit is good for you' reflects a typical comment from pupils. Pupils learn about the importance of a balanced diet and cooking through the 'fuel for school' initiative.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about the range of activities on offer. Sports and the 'Press packer' newspaper club meet their interests well.
- The high majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey shared positive views about the school. Parents place confidence in the new leadership arrangements in the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Most pupils behave well and follow the school's expectations of behaviour. Pupils often respond quickly to instructions from staff in the classroom.
- During breaktimes, some pupils do not keep up the standards of behaviour seen in the classroom. The boisterous behaviour of some older pupils is not challenged by staff consistently.
- The school keeps individual and accurate records of behaviour incidents and bullying. However, this information is not analysed well enough to identify patterns and trends in behaviour that require attention.
- Overall, following a concerted effort by leaders and staff, attendance has improved, and the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent has reduced. However, despite a steady improvement, disadvantaged pupils' attendance remains below that of other pupils nationally.
- The inclusion team is effective in helping pupils who find managing their behaviour and feelings challenging. Sensitive but firm support has helped to improve behaviour and attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Although children in the early years get off to a good start, between Years 1 and 6, most groups of pupils do not make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, outcomes require improvement.
- Over time, overall standards at key stage 2 have not improved sufficiently or been high enough. Published data in 2016 shows that the proportion of pupils in Year 6 reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was lower than the national average. No pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, achieved the higher standard at the end of 2016 in key stage 2. This mirrors the results in previous years.
- In 2016, end of key stage 1 assessments showed that pupils achieved in line with other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics at both the expected and the higher standards. Disadvantaged pupils achieved in line with other pupils nationally in reading, but were behind in writing and mathematics. No disadvantaged pupils achieved the higher standard in writing and mathematics. These outcomes do not represent good progress from pupils' previous starting points on entry to Year 3.

- Currently, pupils' progress throughout the school is uneven. Teachers do not have consistently high expectations for what pupils can achieve. The work set does not challenge pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged, well enough. The school's information indicates that differences are not diminishing quickly enough for disadvantaged pupils. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils, therefore, requires improvement.
- Pupils' progress across the curriculum subjects also varies across classes. Their application of English grammar, punctuation and spelling skills is inconsistent. Opportunities to apply scientific knowledge and understanding are underdeveloped. Expectations in design and technology are limited and do not capitalise on pupils' mathematical skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points. Their individual needs are captured accurately, and frequent checks ensure that their needs are met assiduously.
- Since 2014, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 has increased year on year. Importantly, in 2016, an above-average proportion of pupils met the standard. The strong focus on phonics has brought about marked improvements, especially for boys and disadvantaged pupils. Pupils are better prepared for the demands of Year 2 as a result.

Early years provision

Good

- Overall, children enter the early years with skills, knowledge and understanding typical for their age. However, their skills in reading and writing are often below those typically found on entry.
- The knowledgeable early years leader provides effective leadership and management. Systems for checking children's skills, knowledge and understanding have improved. The leader ensures that her team focuses on improving areas identified as requiring development, including writing and speaking skills. Adults model early letter formation effectively. This results in children producing careful and controlled writing.
- Following a dip last year, a higher proportion of children, including girls and disadvantaged children, are on track to achieve a good level of development this year. Leaders responded swiftly to improve children's skills in writing, speaking and reading following the dip. Boys and girls are making good progress currently from their starting points. Leaders acknowledge that further work is needed to increase the proportion of boys on track to reach a good level of development in reading and writing. Nevertheless, children are being increasingly well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Children are well behaved and work harmoniously with each other. Children take turns and are keen to help one another. Children engage well with one another. Adults model good manners.
- Activities and resources stimulate children's curiosity and fire their imagination. Rich opportunities allow children to explore and be creative. Children were highly engrossed in retelling the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. Children took delight in using shapes to make Granny's house, which helped to support their mathematical development. The children also enjoyed the challenge of making and selling tickets for a puppet show.

- Safeguarding is effective because of adults' adherence to school policies. They put children's safety first. As a result, children feel safe and secure. For example, children help adults to monitor whether the outdoor area is safe to use. Visitors, including the police, teach children about stranger danger and road safety.
- Staff work hard to build up positive relationships with parents. Parents enjoy attending stay-and-play sessions to work alongside their children. The school offers timely information about the teaching of phonics and reading, which is well received.

School details

Unique reference number	107942
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10002833

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	405
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ashley Wyatt
Headteacher	Joe Mitchell
Telephone number	0113 260 6203
Website	www.whitkirk.org/
Email address	info@whitkirk.org
Date of previous inspection	25–26 January 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is a larger than average-sized school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. A below-average proportion of pupils are supported by a statement of special educational needs and education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium funding is in line with other schools nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- The headteacher took up post at the start of the summer term in 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons, many of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors scrutinised examples of work in pupils' books alongside senior leaders.
- The inspectors listened to pupils from Years 2 and 6 read.
- A range of documents were considered, including information about pupils' progress, the school development plan and the school's self-evaluation. Information relating to the primary school PE and sports funding, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding was also scrutinised.
- An inspector met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors.
- A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils during lessons and more informally at breaktimes. Inspectors observed behaviour during lunchtime and during unstructured times of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of the 45 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. Inspectors also took into account parental views at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Brian Stillings, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Wright	Ofsted Inspector
Ella Besharati	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Campbell	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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