

Whittington Green School

High Street, Old Whittington, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S41 9LG

Inspection dates

16–17 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement. Some senior and middle leaders do not yet have the knowledge and skills they require in order to drive the rapid improvements needed.
- Leaders, including governors, do not effectively evaluate the impact of the pupil premium or the additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Although improving, disadvantaged pupils, particularly the most able of them and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make the progress that they should.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment remains inconsistent. Pupils underperform in mathematics, modern foreign languages and art.
- Teachers do not routinely use all the information they have about pupils to ensure that work is set at the right level. Lower attaining pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able disadvantaged pupils do not make enough progress in lessons.
- Some teachers do not yet have high enough expectations of the quality of work they demand from pupils.
- Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 4 are not yet good.
- The number of pupils who regularly fail to attend school, although reducing, still remains too high for some year groups.
- Recently, pupil exclusion increased. The number of exclusions is now declining but is still high.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and teachers deal skilfully with pupils who join the school at unusual points in the school year. Consequently, they more regularly attend school, stay safe and make progress.
- The headteacher has shown great resilience. Under her strong leadership, the school has made improvements since the previous inspection.
- The leader of personal development, behaviour and welfare, although new in this role, has made a significant difference.
- Partnerships with other schools are effective.
- Pupils now make good progress in some of their lessons, particularly in English and science.
- Pupils' behaviour and conduct in lessons and around the school is good. They show respect to visitors and to each other. They are extremely smart in their uniform.
- In 2016, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics at the end of key stage 4 was the best ever result for the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership by:
 - ensuring that leadership capacity continues to improve through effective partnerships
 - ensuring that all senior and middle leaders have the skills required to play an effective role in accelerating school improvement
 - ensuring that the school's use of external government funding is monitored efficiently and that it addresses the barriers of eligible pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - the inconsistencies in teaching quality are eradicated, particularly within mathematics, modern foreign languages and art
 - all teachers use the information that they have about pupils to precisely plan appropriately challenging learning activities, especially for lower-attaining pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able disadvantaged pupils
 - all teachers have equally high expectations of the quality of work they demand of pupils, especially lower-attaining pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - reducing the number of pupils who regularly do not attend school, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - ensuring that all teachers insist on high standards for the presentation of pupils' work
 - reducing further the number of pupils excluded from school.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - pupils' attainment and progress at key stage 3 and key stage 4 continue to improve and meet national expectations
 - disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils with the same starting points, particularly the most able of them
 - lower-attaining pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.

An external review of pupil premium spending should be undertaken.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Although aspects of the school have improved since the previous inspection, there has not been the leadership capacity to drive school improvement at the pace needed.
- Some senior and middle leaders are new to their current areas of responsibility. These leaders have not received the training or the support they require in order to effectively drive improvement at a rapid enough pace.
- The quality of subject leadership, although improving, remains inconsistent. There is still underperformance in some curriculum areas, for example within mathematics, modern foreign languages and art.
- The pupil premium funding is impacting on some individual pupils. However, leaders have an insufficiently precise understanding of the aspects of this spending that have the most impact for groups of disadvantaged pupils. This is particularly the case for the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- The special educational needs coordinator is now more rigorous in her checking that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making the progress they should. However, this group of pupils continues to underachieve. The additional government funding is not having the impact that it could for these pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that catch-up funding is having a positive impact. Many of the pupils who did not achieve expected standards at key stage 2 are now making the progress they should in English and mathematics.
- Leaders make sure that pupils are involved in a full range of activities to develop their social and moral education. Many pupils experience activities outside the local community for the first time in their lives. Some are involved in outdoor pursuits and challenges in order to raise funds for local communities. Pupils and their parents experience success in cookery competitions. Many enjoy the fun of World Book Day and the 'dressing up' of popular characters that takes place. However, leaders recognise there is a need to develop further pupils' understanding of different cultures and religions. Activities have happened but have had limited success. Plans are in place to address this issue.
- Leaders have prioritised the improvement in pupils' behaviour. They have been successful in this. Pupils behave well within lessons and around school.
- In this small school, leaders have been creative to ensure that pupils access a broad and balanced curriculum at key stage 4. Year 10 and Year 11 pupils learn together for some of the key stage 4 option subjects. Appropriate checks are in place to make sure that pupils in each of these year groups make the progress that they should. Ensuring that all pupils study an appropriate range of subjects, according to their abilities and interests, is a key priority for leaders.
- Pupils receive high-quality careers information, advice and guidance. They receive good support from their teachers in order to make their decisions. The proportion of pupils who are not in employment, education or training once they leave the school is extremely low.

- The headteacher has successfully made a range of highly productive links with a teaching school, local schools and the local authority. She has made sure that this small school looks outwards to learn and then benefit from the very best practice.
- The quality of training and professional development opportunities that staff receive is good. Professional development opportunities include working with teachers and specialists from other local schools. Teachers said that they value this investment. Leaders have ensured that the management of teachers' performance is rigorous. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the previous inspection.
- Under the leadership of the headteacher, the school has improved. She has not shied away from making difficult decisions and has found creative solutions to address complex issues including those linked to leadership, staffing and budget.
- The inclusive ethos of the school is palpable. A strong philosophy exists to ensure a genuinely inclusive school that meets the needs of the community it serves. Some pupils, who have not been successful in their previous secondary school, join Whittingham Green School and thrive.

Governance

- Governors have not made sure that additional government funding is having the maximum impact on the eligible pupils.
- The chair and vice-chair of the governing body have the knowledge, experience and skills needed to provide effective governance. At times, however, they have not ensured that the pace of improvement has been sufficiently swift.
- Governors have adapted their ways of working to ensure closer monitoring of school improvement priorities. The monitoring of school improvement planning and the associated targets is not yet sharp enough.
- Governors know the school well. They have worked with the school leaders and the local authority to safeguard the future of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders keep meticulous records. The arrangements for the recruitment of all staff are appropriate and increasingly rigorous.
- Leaders and staff work with a great deal of determination and care in order to make sure that pupils are safe within school and that they receive the appropriate support if they require it. Work with outside agencies is good and pupils benefit as a result. Those pupils who enter the school at unusual points within the year receive extensive and bespoke support in order that they swiftly settle into the life of the school.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe within the school. They said that there is nowhere within school that they would not feel safe to go. They said that they appreciate that there are now pupils who conduct the role of bullying ambassadors and that there is always someone to turn to if they need help.

- Pupils have timetabled opportunities to develop the skills required to keep themselves safe. This includes when online and when using the mobile phone. They learn about the ways in which individuals are exploited, particularly when they are vulnerable. They do not, however, have sufficient opportunities to learn about radicalisation, the 'Prevent' duty and the issues relating to female genital mutilation.
- Pupils who receive their education in alternative provision receive high-quality support and are attending school much more regularly as a result.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching in mathematics is inconsistent. The relatively new leader of this department is making a difference but there is still work to be done.
- Although improving, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Inspectors saw pupils making good progress within English, science and humanities lessons. Pupils make much less progress within art and modern foreign languages.
- Teachers do not routinely use all the information they have about pupils to ensure that work is set at the right level. For example, pupils are required to work at a lower level than they are capable of before moving to more appropriately challenging tasks. This slows their progress.
- Sometimes the expectations of lower-attaining pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or the most able disadvantaged pupils are not high enough. Tasks are set at too low a level, requiring no more than basic comprehension skills or simple recall of knowledge in order to complete the work.
- Not all teachers have equally high expectations of the quality of work demanded of pupils. Some pupils, particularly lower-attaining pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able disadvantaged pupils receive praise too readily for work that is not representative of their true talents and abilities.
- Where staff are planning for the needs of all the pupils in their classes, pupils are engaged, passionate to succeed and clearly making the progress that they should. Inspectors observed examples of this in a science lesson – the positive 'buzz' of learning was impressive to observe.
- The whole-school strategies adopted in order to improve pupils' engagement in their learning are beginning to work well. Pupils enter their lessons promptly, are considerate of their teachers and settle well to their learning.
- Often, pupils enjoy warm, positive and supportive relationships with their teachers. Lessons are, for the most part, calm and purposeful.
- In lessons where learning is more effective, teachers use questioning strategies skilfully to probe pupils' understanding, improve the quality of their technical language and their confidence to debate and share ideas. Inspectors saw pupils making accelerated progress within their geography and history lessons due to the use of such strategies.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good
- The above-average proportion of pupils who enter the school other than at the usual times of joining are swiftly integrated into school life, settle well and make progress. Many value their education where perhaps once they did not.
- Pupils said that they feel safe to be who they want to be. Staff and pupils were able to articulate clearly the positive ethos of tolerance and care that existed within school, particularly with regards to the lesbian, gay and bisexual pupil community. For example, they appreciated the care and consideration taken at the celebration of difference shown at the Year 11 end-of-school celebration.
- The 'Think before you speak' programme has been successful. Pupils said that they feel safe within their school and that the incidence of name-calling and silliness has reduced.
- In the more effective lessons, pupils show a real love of learning, and an ambition to make progress and to succeed.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although attendance is improving for the majority of pupils, the number of pupils who frequently fail to attend school in some year groups is still too high.
- Staff from the pastoral team and the special educational needs coordinator have had some success in reducing the number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who fail to regularly attend school. However, the proportion of these pupils who are regularly absent from school remains too high.
- Expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct have increased. This has led to an increase in fixed-term exclusions. Although now reducing, the number of pupils excluded from school for short periods remains high.
- Expectations of some pupils are not high enough. Some pupils, particularly low-attaining pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able disadvantaged pupils get away with producing careless and untidy work.
- In weaker lessons, although not disruptive, pupils do not exhibit positive learning behaviours.
- The introduction of the positive support programme has successfully increased teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct within school. Low-level disruption within lessons is now rare. Pupils are a credit to their school.
- The school is an orderly environment in which pupils can learn. Every effort is made to ensure that, even within buildings that require some renovation, pupils' achievements are celebrated. Efforts are made to ensure positive and attractive displays.

- Pupils respond to teachers' instructions, are polite, and show courtesy to visitors and to each other.
- The vast majority of pupils who receive their education within alternative provision attend regularly and experience success within their studies.
- Pupils are now prompt to their lessons and arrive equipped and ready to learn.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils who join the school at unusual times have sometimes previously experienced significant disruption to their learning. These pupils receive effective support from all school staff and settle quickly to their learning. Although they make progress and succeed in many of the subjects they study, they too often do not make the progress they should according to their starting points. This is particularly the case for lower-attaining pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- The progress that pupils make is too variable between subjects and within subjects. While pupils make reasonable progress in some subjects, they do not do so across the full range of the curriculum.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils, including the most able of them, made notably less progress at the end of key stage 4 than others in the school. The school's use of the pupil premium has not had sufficient impact on their progress.
- In some year groups, particularly in Year 9, differences in attainment and progress between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are diminishing. Pupil premium funding effectively benefits individual pupils and has certainly been helpful in ensuring that pupils receive positive care and support, particularly those pupils who have recently joined the school. However, there is more to do to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make consistently good progress.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils attaining a good GCSE pass in English and mathematics was the best-ever result for the school and was close to the national average.
- Information provided by the school, together with a scrutiny of pupils' work, indicates improved rates of progress in English and mathematics. This is especially true of disadvantaged pupils.
- A very small number of pupils attend off-site provision. Records indicate that these pupils are making good progress on their courses.

School details

Unique reference number	112958
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10023096

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bryan Midgley
Headteacher	Tracey Burnside
Telephone number	01246 450 825
Website	www.wgs.derbyshire.sch.uk
Email address	info@wgs.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 January 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Pupils' mobility is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is higher than the average. Over a third of pupils are eligible for this additional government funding.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is greater than the national average, as is the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few speak English as an additional language.

- The school met the government's current floor standards for pupils' achievement at key stage 4 in 2016.
- The school receives support from the Cavendish Learning Trust.
- A very few pupils attend Chesterfield College for part of their education.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 lessons, some jointly with senior school leaders.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books within lessons. A sample of the work of the most able pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in a range of subjects was scrutinised.
- The lead inspector held a range of meetings, including with the headteacher, with an assistant headteacher and those with responsibility for the single central register and teachers' recruitment. Meetings took place with the assistant director of education for Derbyshire local authority and the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. The lead inspector met with one parent who made a request for the meeting.
- Inspectors held meetings with the behaviour and achievement leads, the special educational needs coordinator and a selection of subject leaders. Inspectors spoke to pastoral leaders, the attendance officer, the senior leader for teaching, learning and assessment and the leader with oversight of the curriculum.
- An inspector conducted a health and safety walk of the school site.
- Inspectors spoke formally with groups of pupils.
- An inspector spoke with a representative from Chesterfield College.
- Inspectors observed pupils arriving to the school. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, between lessons, and during breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school, including the school development plan and self-evaluation, performance information for all year groups, and records on behaviour, attendance, exclusions, and pupils' safety and welfare. Documentation relating to pupil premium spending and the provision for these pupils was scrutinised, as was information regarding pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors reviewed information about teachers' performance. The minutes of governing body minutes were analysed.
- An inspector conducted a thorough review of the curriculum offer for key stage 4 pupils.
- Inspectors considered the 12 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered the 68 responses from members of the school staff to the Ofsted online inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's 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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