

Whittington CofE Primary School

Whittington, Worcester, Worcestershire WR5 2QZ

Inspection dates

14–15 November 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	Good
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

- Leaders, including governors, do not use assessment information sufficiently well to monitor the progress that pupils make. As a result, they have an overly positive view of the quality of teaching.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, the most able pupils and those of average ability do not make the progress that they are capable of in English and mathematics.
- Leaders do not use the management of teachers' performance well enough to hold teachers to account for pupils' outcomes.
- While there is a focus from teachers on enabling pupils to write for a purpose, insufficient attention is paid to developing pupils' knowledge and use of grammar.
- Improvement planning is not sufficiently focused on the most important priorities for the school. Plans do not have clearly defined measures to enable leaders to evaluate the impact of actions they have taken.
- Opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge in problem-solving are not sufficiently well established across all year groups.
- Teachers do not accurately identify common errors in pupils' spelling. As a result, these errors are repeated.
- Recent changes to the teaching of phonics are yet to be embedded across the whole school. Opportunities to extend pupils' depth of understanding of what they read are under-developed.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make a positive start in the early years as a result of good teaching and high expectations.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and for disadvantaged pupils is effective in helping them make good progress.
- Leaders are successful in ensuring that pupils feel safe in school. The very large majority of pupils are well behaved and benefit from the opportunities the school offers them.
- The school's strong Christian values develop pupils' consideration and respect for others. A wide range of experiences are provided through the curriculum.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is good or better, and secure consistently good progress for pupils in key stages 1 and 2 by:
 - ensuring that teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and set work that is accurately matched to their abilities, especially for average ability and the most able pupils
 - ensuring that all teachers identify frequent and common errors that pupils make and insist upon accuracy in spelling
 - ensuring that teachers place a greater emphasis on the use of grammar within the teaching of writing
 - ensuring that teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to solve complex problems using reasoning in mathematics
 - embedding recent changes to the teaching of phonics and ensuring that teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their depth of understanding of what they read.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that senior leaders make more effective use of the assessment information that the school holds on pupils to analyse the impact of teaching on pupils' outcomes
 - refining monitoring and evaluation processes to more accurately identify the most important priorities for the school that will bring about the necessary improvements in teaching and pupils' outcomes
 - ensuring that plans for improvement include tightly defined measures of success, timescales for actions linked to the school's most pressing priorities and systems to monitor and evaluate the impact of leaders' actions
 - reviewing and revising systems for the management of teachers' performance to more effectively hold them to account.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school and as a result, pupils' outcomes by the time they leave the school in Year 6 have not been sufficiently strong over the past two years. Leaders have an overly optimistic view of the quality of teaching and, consequently, have not taken all the necessary actions needed to bring about improvements.
- Leaders have not made effective use of the assessment information that they gather on pupils. There has been too much focus on the attainment of pupils and too little on the progress that they make from their starting points. As a result, weaker progress from some pupils has not been addressed swiftly enough.
- School improvement plans are not sharply focused on the most pressing and important priorities for the school. A lack of well-defined success criteria, and timescales by when objectives will be achieved, limits leaders' effectiveness in monitoring the impact of the actions they have taken.
- The headteacher and other leaders undertake a range of monitoring activities, including scrutiny of pupils' work and observations of teaching. While systems for the management of teachers' performance are in place, they are not used effectively to hold teachers to account for the outcomes of the pupils they teach. The objectives that are set are too generic and do not relate to individuals' specific needs.
- Until recently, the majority of leadership and management tasks were undertaken by the headteacher. The recent appointment of a deputy headteacher has strengthened the capacity of leaders to bring about the necessary improvements. While it is too soon to judge the impact of changes that are being made, senior leaders understand that actions need to be taken to raise the rates of progress for pupils.
- The headteacher has a strong commitment to ensuring that pupils develop as caring and considerate individuals who understand their responsibilities as citizens within modern British society. Parents commented positively on his presence at the beginning of the school day when he greets pupils as they enter the school site. He ensures that all members of the school community understand and demonstrate the school's core Christian values, including, 'respect, responsibility and friendship'.
- The promotion and support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school's work. Pupils are encouraged to be reflective individuals. They are provided with good opportunities to learn about and understand the beliefs and traditions of people of different faiths, including visits to a mosque in Worcester and celebrations of festivals including Diwali and Eid.
- Leaders make good use of partnerships with other local schools. Opportunities for staff to observe and learn from good and outstanding practice in other schools are being extended. Newly qualified teachers speak positively of the support they receive from mentors in school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and well planned to enable pupils to develop investigative skills in subjects such as geography and science. Pupils benefit from visits to relevant and interesting places, including the 'Think Tank' in Birmingham, that help

promote a deeper interest in learning. Very good use is made of subject specialists for music and modern foreign languages. This enables pupils to be fully engaged in these lessons.

- Pupils are provided with a good range of enrichment activities, including after-school sports clubs for football and netball, sewing and arts clubs, and a school choir. Pupils in Years 4 and 6 participate in residential visits to an outdoor adventure centre in Malvern. These visits help to develop resilience and independence and deepen pupils' understanding of how they can manage risk.
- Leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good. Additional funding is used well to provide appropriate support, including advice from outside agencies such as educational psychologists and autistic spectrum disorder support.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively. Leaders have used funding to employ specific staff to work with and support the small number of disadvantaged pupils in school. This has helped to diminish differences in their outcomes against other pupils nationally.
- The primary physical education and sports funding is allocated and used well. Involvement in a local sports partnership with other schools has extended opportunities for pupils to participate in competitive activities. Specialist staff work alongside teachers to develop their confidence and skills in leading physical and games activities.

Governance of the school

- Governors ask relevant questions of school leaders regarding many aspects of the school's work. They are supportive of school leaders but also provide a good level of challenge. While governors understand the need to check the progress of different groups of pupils, they have not been sufficiently vigilant in checking the progress of the most able pupils and those with average ability.
- Governors revised their organisational structures last year and all governors are now linked to a specific class. Governors undertake a range of monitoring activities, including learning walks alongside school leaders. While they use the external assessment information well to compare how the school is doing against other schools nationally, they appreciate that there is a need for more internal school analysis of the progress that pupils make.
- Governors have a good understanding of how the school helps to protect and care for pupils. They make regular checks on safeguarding arrangements and are suitably trained in how to protect pupils from the threat of radicalisation and terrorism.
- Governors have been proactive in extending parents' knowledge of the work of the governing body. They provide bi-annual updates on their involvement in the life of the school. During the last academic year they carried out a survey of parents' views of the school that helped inform them on areas where they could make improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher has ensured that staff are well trained in recognising potential signs

of abuse and are fully aware of their responsibilities in protecting pupils. This has helped to develop a culture 'of it could happen here' whereby staff are vigilant and respond appropriately if a pupil raises a concern or appears to be at risk.

- Record keeping is thorough and used well to track any concerns. Where appropriate, advice is sought from outside agencies, including social services or the local authority's designated officer.
- Systems for checking the suitability of any staff appointed to the school are rigorous and well managed. The school site is safe with secure entrances.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There is too much inconsistency in teaching across key stages 1 and 2 and as a result, pupils do not make sustained good progress as they move through the school. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. Too often the work that is set is not sufficiently demanding for some pupils of average ability and for the most able pupils. Older pupils spoken to during the inspection commented that at times the work is too easy. Evidence of this was clearly seen in pupils' books.
- Teachers do not ensure that pupils are accurate in their spellings of commonly used words, including the months of the year and days of the week. Errors are not drawn to pupils' attention and as a result, are often repeated.
- Teachers provide pupils with a range of opportunities to write at length. However, teachers do not place enough importance on teaching pupils about the use of grammar. This results in pupils having a lack of deep understanding of how grammar can be used effectively to improve a piece of writing.
- Leaders have recognised that there has not been a systematic and whole-school approach to the teaching of phonics. Changes have been implemented in the early years provision and are beginning to be put in place in lower key stage 1. However, as yet not all staff have had appropriate training in how to support pupils in using phonics in their reading and writing. This means some pupils are not secure in building words using sounds.
- Teachers' approach to developing pupils' depth of understanding of what they have read, including through using inference and deduction, has not been successful over time. A new approach has been adopted this term but it is too early to judge whether it has been successful in improving comprehension skills in reading.
- As a result of low outcomes in mathematics across the school that became apparent through the 2016 national assessments, leaders introduced changes to the teaching of mathematics. There is now a greater emphasis on pupils gaining a firm grasp of computation. Teachers now use a commonly agreed approach to develop pupils' knowledge of methods of calculation, such as division and subtraction. This has helped to improve this aspect of the teaching of mathematics. However, teachers are not yet ensuring that opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in problem-solving using reasoning are firmly embedded. This limits pupils' abilities to think deeply about how

they will undertake a problem and explain their thinking.

- There is good teaching within the school. Where this is clearly evident teachers use questioning well to probe pupils' understanding and set high expectations for what should be achieved.
- Teaching of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good. Pupils' needs are accurately assessed and well planned for and support is put in place. Teaching assistants work well with these pupils, breaking tasks down into small steps so that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to successfully complete an activity.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are good. Pupils speak positively and with enthusiasm about their teachers and say that often learning is fun.
- Specialist teaching of music is used effectively. During the inspection, pupils in a key stage 2 class were seen responding enthusiastically and with skill in the playing of brass instruments, including trombones and trumpets. The teacher used strong subject knowledge to promote enjoyment and to allow pupils to make rapid progress.
- School staff also use their subject expertise well. Older pupils in key stage 2 were observed in a design technology lesson applying concentration and dexterity in making slippers from a variety of materials. They applied skills from other subjects, such as measurement, and were encouraged by adults to show independence and perseverance.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are respectful of each other and demonstrate good manners, such as opening doors and saying 'please' and 'thank you'. Pupils wear their uniform with pride and take care to ensure that the school site is litter free and well cared for.
- Pupils develop an understanding and appreciation of the natural environment through activities in the 'forest school', such as planting trees donated from a local organisation.
- Pupils and parents commented positively on the sense of unity and respect that exists within this small school. A pupil's comment that, 'We are like a family and care for each other' typified the views of many.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is and know that it is distressing and unacceptable. They said that there is little bullying in the school and that when it has occurred adults deal with it swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe is good. They know about online safety and the need to keep passwords safe and not give information to strangers over the internet. Teachers ensure that pupils' mental well-being is supported effectively and ensure that personal, social and emotional issues are explored sensitively in lessons.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The very large majority of pupils behave well and adhere to the school's behaviour expectations. Pupils know there are sanctions that will be applied if they do not behave appropriately.
- Pupils show maturity in their behaviour on the playgrounds. Despite the restrictions in space, they use the carefully zoned areas for more physical play or as spaces to be quieter and talk to friends. Older pupils offer support to younger pupils and encourage them to enjoy their playtimes.
- There are occasions when teaching is less engaging and pupils' attention wanders and they lose concentration. When this occurs they do not usually disturb other pupils' learning.
- Attendance is above the national average. School leaders promote the need for regular attendance and a senior leader is on duty each day to encourage pupils to arrive at school on time. Effective action has been taken to improve the attendance of a small number of disadvantaged pupils who were away from school too often.
- There are a small number of pupils who do not at times behave appropriately. Where this occurs, leaders take appropriate action to address the issues.
- A minority of parents expressed some concern about the behaviour of a few pupils. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that the school deals effectively with these pupils. The large majority of parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire, or who were spoken to by inspectors, were positive about the work of the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress as they move through the school is not consistently good. Too few pupils reach the higher standards of attainment in reading, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling by the time they leave the school in Year 6.
- In both 2016 and 2017, the progress of the most able pupils at the end of key stage 2 was well below that of similar pupils nationally in reading and mathematics. Overall attainment had risen in these subjects in 2017 but the proportion reaching the higher standards was still below the national average.
- Pupils' attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling is below that of other pupils nationally. This reflects the need for these aspects of writing to be taught more effectively across the school.
- Evidence gathered during the inspection, including from scrutiny of current pupils' work in books, shows that while lower-ability pupils tend to make good or better progress, this is not consistently the case for all average-ability pupils or the most able pupils.
- The proportion of pupils that met the expected standard in the national Year 1 phonics screening check has been above the national average for the past three years. It is to leaders' credit that while this is the case, they recognise that not all pupils are secure in applying their phonic knowledge in word-building and spelling correctly. This was

confirmed by evidence gathered during the inspection, including from hearing pupils read.

- The attainment of pupils in Year 2 improved in 2017 and is now in line or above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The most able pupils in Year 2 also attained better than in 2016.
- Pupils make better progress in other subjects, including science. This is due to the development work that has been done to provide more opportunities for pupils to undertake investigative work.
- The small number of disadvantaged pupils in school generally make good progress. Their attainment in national assessments compares well with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress and gaps in their learning are addressed successfully. This is the result of good support from teachers and teaching assistants.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start in the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. As a result of good teaching they make good progress and are well prepared for the move to Year 1. While there was a slight dip in outcomes in 2017, the large majority of children reached a good level of development.
- Teaching is good in the early years provision. Teachers and other adults set high expectations for children, both in terms of what they are expected to achieve and for their social and emotional development. All areas of learning are well supported and this helps children develop as confident and inquisitive learners.
- Relationships between adults and children are strong. Staff in the early years provision help children to settle in quickly when they start at school. Staff liaise well with parents so they are aware of each child's particular needs and abilities. All parents are encouraged to attend a one-to-one meeting before their child starts in the Reception class. The information gathered from these meetings is used as part of the initial assessments and enables staff to plan activities that are stimulating and relevant.
- Activities are well planned by teachers and teaching assistants to promote learning from the time that children start in school. There is a strong and effective focus on developing skills in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, during the inspection, children were observed in a mathematics session demonstrating a rapidly growing awareness of one-more-than and one-less-than. The most able children were suitably challenged by the introduction of two-digit numbers and took delight in showing their addition and subtraction skills. A range of activities, in both the indoor and outdoor classrooms, supported children in identifying and writing numbers accurately.
- All staff use questions well to develop and extend children's spoken language. Children are encouraged to answer in sentences.
- Children develop good social skills. They take turns and listen attentively when someone else is speaking. Behaviour is good and children respond quickly and sensibly to instructions from adults.

- The same strong focus that exists elsewhere in the school on ensuring that safeguarding is effective is evident in the early years provision. All welfare requirements are fully met and staff are suitably trained.
- Children with SEN and/or disabilities are well supported through judicious use of funding. Where appropriate, additional advice is sought from outside agencies, including speech therapists. Disadvantaged children make the same good progress as others in the early years provision.
- Leadership of the early years is good. Leaders have clear and well thought-out plans on how provision can be further improved. They recognise that the outdoor area can be developed further and are putting in place actions to bring this about.

School details

Unique reference number	116856
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10037874

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Newell
Headteacher	Gary Richards
Telephone number	01905 354 844
Website	www.whittington.worcs.sch.uk
Email address	office@whittington.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 March 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the use of sports funding for the current academic year and the accessibility plan for disabled pupils on its website.
- Whittington CofE Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below that in most schools.
- There is one class in each year group.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 6.
- The deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2017.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 19 lessons or parts of lessons.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met with a group of pupils. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunch and breaktimes, as well as in lessons. An inspector observed an assembly.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance, records of how teaching is managed and the school improvement plans.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the SEN coordinator, the early years leaders and a subject leader. The lead inspector met with two members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. He had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took into consideration the 35 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors met parents at the start of the school day. They considered the 12 responses from staff to a questionnaire.

Inspection team

Adam Hewett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Bates

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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