

# Whitefield Community Primary School

Victoria Avenue, Whitefield, Manchester M45 6DP

## Inspection dates

21–22 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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and assessment has not been good enough over time to secure pupils' good progress in all year groups.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are rising, but they are still not consistently high enough.
- In some classes, pupils do not have enough work to do, or at the right level, to help them catch up on past underachievement.
- Too few pupils are working at greater depth and reaching higher standards, including the most able.
- While pupils in key stage 1 use their phonics well to read new words, their comprehension skills are underdeveloped, especially in Year 2.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length or to reason and solve problems in mathematics.
- Leaders have been slow to design a curriculum that is tailored to the needs of the pupils. Work is underway on a 'Whitefield curriculum' but it is in its infancy.
- Pupils are not clear about what skills they are to develop or what new learning they will gain in lessons.
- The support given to pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is not precisely enough targeted at their needs to ensure their best progress.
- Provision in the early years requires improvement because systems are new and have not had time to show an impact.

### The school has the following strengths

- In the short time since his appointment, the headteacher has brought significant improvement to many areas of school life.
- The headteacher very quickly gained an accurate view of the school's performance. His leadership is excellent.
- Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They support and challenge the headteacher well.
- Under the headteacher's guidance, subject leaders are developing well. Staff are determined to get things right for the pupils.
- Pupils' reading skills are improving in key stage 2. They are gaining a better understanding of what they read.
- Behaviour is good, and pupils feel safe in school. The school is vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety and security during the current building works.
- In the early years, learning is planned well indoors and outside, with staff making good use of the temporary accommodation. Children are beginning to make good progress.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils can make even faster progress in all year groups and subjects by:
  - eliminating the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and ensuring that teachers in all classes have equally high expectations
  - ensuring that, in all subjects, pupils understand what it is they are expected to learn, as well as what they are expected to do
  - ensuring that teachers give all pupils, especially the most able, more and harder work to do in lessons
  - tightening up provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities so that their work is better planned and assessed, and their progress maximised.
- Increase the rate at which pupils are progressing in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - in reading, completing the work on helping pupils to understand what they read in all age groups, especially in key stage 1
  - in writing, expecting more and longer pieces of writing from pupils and ensuring that, when pupils write in different subjects, they remember to use their spelling, grammar, presentation and handwriting skills equally well at all times
  - in mathematics, increasing pupils' reasoning skills, their ability to use their mathematical skills to solve problems and their understanding of the importance of mathematics in everyday life.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum by:
  - planning creative and exciting opportunities to give all pupils rich experiences to inspire them to learn and make better progress
  - making sure that pupils' skills are developed progressively across the curriculum, and their learning builds on what they already know, understand and can do.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- On his appointment, the new headteacher quickly analysed what needed to be done to improve the school's performance. Together with governors and staff, he has successfully embedded a new vision whereby staff work together to achieve the best outcomes for all pupils. Despite some improvement beginning to emerge, the systems have not been in place long enough to secure good teaching and learning across the school. However, the renewed vigour with which leaders are pursuing improvement and some clear signs of that improvement indicate that there is a secure capacity for the school to improve further.
- For subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics, the curriculum is organised in topics. There is not enough work in pupils' books, work is sometimes left unfinished and science lacks in-depth investigative work. This means that it is difficult to see the progress pupils are making or the skills they are developing in different subjects. Nevertheless, some good links are beginning to emerge, for example between mathematics and art, as Year 5 pupils explained when they were learning about angles.
- The headteacher has introduced new systems for checking pupils' progress. The information is beginning to be used to provide pupils with extra help to catch up with their learning in reading, writing and mathematics. The system allows for progress to be measured in other subjects, but this work is only at a very early stage and its impact is not yet evident.
- The funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is allocated appropriately to support these pupils. However, the targets set for pupils are not precise enough, making it difficult to measure progress towards them accurately. Staff do not keep a close enough eye on whether the programmes are working.
- Staff morale is high. Responses to the questionnaire for staff were extremely positive. Staff have risen well to the high expectations the headteacher has very quickly established. They are developing a more precise understanding of how what they do in different year groups contributes to how well pupils do in Year 6.
- Evaluations of teaching and learning are accurate and well founded. Senior leaders check on areas to be improved in a timely manner to ensure that teachers have responded to what they need to do to improve. Teachers reflect on what they are doing and whether it is helping pupils to learn better. They appreciate the support they get from leaders and each other.
- Subject leaders very much appreciate the training they have had to help them fulfil their roles. They are making good use of it to check teaching and learning in their subjects and to provide training and support for staff. They talk enthusiastically about how staff are beginning to work together and learn from each other.
- The effective use leaders have made of expertise from the local authority and their links with a number of local schools have also helped with the improvements so far.
- Funding for disadvantaged pupils is being put to good use to help this group of pupils to achieve better. Leaders are firmly committed to ensuring that there is no

discrimination of any sort and that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.

- The primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding is used well to support teachers in teaching PE and to extend the range of sports clubs available to pupils. It has also helped pupils to take part in sporting activities outside school.
- Leaders' evaluations of how well the school is doing are very accurate. The weaknesses identified inform school improvement planning and, subsequently, the targets set for teachers as part of the management of their performance. The headteacher holds staff strictly accountable for how well each pupil is doing. Well-targeted training, including work with other schools, ensures that staff have the support they need to help pupils do as well as they can.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively, as is their understanding of British values, especially in respect of tolerance and respect for all. The school takes swift action to deal with any untoward incidents, including derogatory behaviour or language.
- All parents who spoke with inspectors and virtually all who replied to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, say that they are very satisfied with the school and the progress their children are making. They recognise the improvement that is now taking place and they praise staff, including the headteacher, for being approachable and helpful. They particularly like the new approach to reading. They also feel that they are now more involved in the life of the school.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors are highly committed to the school and they fulfil their roles well. They know the school well and are keenly aware of the need for more rapid improvement.
- Governors reflect well on their own ability to help the school improve. They have a strong action plan to improve governance further. The plan is closely linked to the school improvement plan and the school motto – inspire, dream, achieve.
- Governors have been instrumental in shaping the direction of the school. While providing good support for the headteacher, they constantly challenge him to find ways to improve even faster. They use their expertise well to do so.
- Governors know how staff performance is managed and how well pupils are doing. They analyse outcomes and know that pay progression is linked to performance. They know where teaching is weaker and support the headteacher in improving it.
- Governors regularly discuss developments with the headteacher and staff. They are well informed, including through the full and informative reports they receive from the headteacher.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All training, including for child protection, is up to date, with further training arranged for early next year. All staff with whom inspectors spoke demonstrated good knowledge of what to do should a pupil approach them with a concern.

- The school's central record on the suitability of staff contains all necessary information. Office staff check visitors when they arrive in school and provide them with a leaflet that outlines clearly the school's approach to safeguarding. Every effort is taken to minimise risks to pupils, including during the current building works.
- Leaders have fine-tuned strategies to improve attendance. They liaise well with parents and other agencies, including the local authority, to make sure that pupils are supported and safe. Staff are vigilant in following up all absences.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Although improving, the quality of teaching over time has not been good enough to secure good progress for all pupils in all year groups. Progress is hindered because pupils, including the most able, sometimes waste time doing work they already understand, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' books show that teachers' expectations of the amount and quality of work pupils do are not always high enough. In lessons, the time spent repeating work means that, too often, there is not enough time left for pupils to write at length in English or in other subjects, or to reason and solve problems in mathematics. Teachers encourage pupils to write in different subjects. They do not always make sure that pupils use their literacy skills correctly when they do this.
- The targets set for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are not precise and measurable enough to secure their good progress. Nevertheless, as teachers become more confident in checking and improving pupils' learning, they are giving teaching assistants clearer direction. Teaching assistants work with different ability groups at different times, in class or away from it for short, targeted learning sessions. These sessions are having a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Teachers provide a range of activities for the pupils to do. Pupils are not always clear about what they are expected to learn in these activities. They too often end up repeating work instead of moving on to harder work.
- Teachers follow the school's feedback policy but they miss opportunities to help pupils learn faster by ensuring that they learn from their mistakes and take more responsibility for improving their own learning.
- Reading records for some pupils in key stage 1 show that the pupils are not heard reading often enough in this age group. The teaching of phonics is good and pupils use their phonics skills well to help them read new words. However, when an inspector listened to them read, it was clear the pupils did not have well-enough-developed comprehension skills for their age.
- The teaching of reading is improving rapidly in key stage 2. Teachers are fostering in the pupils a love of books and focusing them more precisely on understanding and being able to comment on what they have read.
- The recent initiatives to improve teaching and learning are beginning to be successful. Well-targeted training and support have helped teachers to become more accurate at assessing how well their pupils are learning and to understand how to use the information to take that learning further.
- Most teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge as they question pupils, probe

their thinking and build on their responses step by step. In a mathematics session, this led to pupils in Year 1 gaining a much better understanding of how to count on from a given number. In an English session, it helped pupils in Year 3 to understand how to write instructions and make notes to explain why the instructions were necessary.

- Morale among staff is high and staff are working together well to help and support each other.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Parents praise the school for its work in this area.
- Pupils are polite, mannerly and articulate. They are confident when speaking to adults, and they have a mature and sensible outlook. They are becoming increasingly competent learners who want to do well and are proud when they succeed. They say that to succeed, they need to 'try hard and never give up'.
- They are also proud of the school. Without prompting, they recite and discuss the school motto and the new code of conduct.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, in and out of school, including when using the internet. They report that bullying is very rare and not tolerated at any level. They understand the different forms bullying can take, including cyber bullying, and what to do if they experience or know of any. They know to be vigilant should anyone try to persuade them to do something they know to be wrong.
- Pupils are very confident that an adult will help them should they have any concerns at all. They say that 'everyone is friendly' and they help each other too. They raise money for various charities, and learn about democracy through the school council and a visit from the mayor.
- Pupils readily accept others. They explain that 'everyone is equal even if they have a different religion or different colour of skin'. Pupils understand why it is wrong to use the word 'gay' in a derogatory way because it is offensive. The school weaves respect and tolerance into a 'school creed', which pupils follow well.
- Pupils appreciate the school's agreed new feedback system because they can see how it will help them to understand what they must do to improve. However, it is not yet used consistently well enough to correct errors systematically and for pupils to learn from them.
- While there is a range of responsibilities for older pupils, which they fulfil well, pupils in different year groups would like more. Pupils also want more after-school clubs and more involvement in the outdoor learning project that is in place for younger pupils. Leaders are working on all of this.
- Well-attended before- and after-school clubs provide a smooth start and end to the day for the pupils who attend them. Safeguarding systems are equally good in these clubs and pupils very much enjoy the activities available to them.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents, pupils and staff all stated overwhelmingly that this is usually the case.
- Pupils appreciate the systems of rewards and sanctions. They talk about the school motto being inspiring, and the code of conduct necessary to enable the school to operate smoothly. They are developing an understanding of the need for the rule of law in society.
- Behaviour is equally good at lunchtime and playtimes. Pupils of all backgrounds and cultures mix and play well together, making these times happy, social occasions for everyone.
- Pupils know that good behaviour assists their learning. To their credit, pupils in most classes behave well, even when their learning is too easy or unnecessarily repetitive. Occasionally, there is some restlessness and low-level disruption, but most remain on task well.
- Attendance is average. The rate of unauthorised absence has risen recently because the rules on extended holidays during term time have been tightened. The school impresses on pupils and their parents the importance of regular attendance and the negative effect that absence can have on their progress.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils' books, observations in lessons and data held by the school show that, for all groups of pupils, progress is too variable across the school for it to be good overall. This links to the quality of teaching, some of which has led to gaps in pupils' learning. Leaders are tackling all of this well and there is evidence of improvement in most year groups.
- Staff do not regularly build on what pupils already know. Nor do they check attainment on entry for the considerable proportion of pupils who join the school at different times so that they can measure progress from that point. New systems are in place to help with all of this, but they have not had time to show an impact.
- The progress of pupils in Year 6 in 2017 was slightly better than the previous year. While standards rose in reading, writing and mathematics combined, they fell in mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 6 are working broadly within the levels expected for their age. They are beginning to make some good progress but, as in other year groups, they have much catching up to do to make up for previous underachievement.
- The outcomes of the phonics screening check for Year 1 have improved over time. Pupils use their phonics skills well to read new or unfamiliar words and they are proud of their achievements in this area.
- In 2017, there was a slight improvement in reading in Year 2, but standards fell slightly in mathematics and even more so in writing. Progress in reading skills, especially comprehension, is too variable across the key stage. Records show that pupils in Year 2, particularly lower-ability pupils, are not heard reading often enough. Given their starting points, these pupils are not making enough progress.

- In both key stages 1 and 2, pupils sometimes repeat work unnecessarily in writing and mathematics. This limits their progress.
- Pupils do not have enough time or opportunity to write at length in different styles or for different purposes. They write in different subjects but the amount and type of writing are limited and insufficient attention is paid to pupils using correct grammar, spelling and punctuation or to writing clearly and legibly.
- In mathematics, pupils' reasoning skills and their ability to solve mathematical problems are hindered by too much repetitive, exercise-based work. Pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to explain or expand on their answers to show their learning or to use what they have learned to solve mathematical problems.
- Pupils' attainment in reading improved in key stage 2 in 2017 and it continues to do so. Pupils, especially boys, have risen to the challenge of the quizzes they must complete to test their comprehension skills before they can move onto a new book. Pupils say that they 'love reading' now. They also enjoy the much wider range of books from which they can now choose.
- Despite a lack of written evidence, pupils talk enthusiastically about what they have discussed in different subjects. Nevertheless, there is little evidence of investigative work in science or of skills development in their books in other subjects to determine how much progress they make across a wide range of subjects.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is behind that of other pupils nationally but, as with all other groups, it varies from one class to another. As they revamp the curriculum, leaders are looking at ways of closing gaps more quickly for these pupils to help them catch up with their peers in all classes. As with other groups, the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities varies from class to class and requires improvement.
- The most able pupils do not make consistently good progress. They do not have enough work at a higher level in all classes to help them reach the higher standards of which they are capable. Too few pupils are working at a higher level or at greater depth.
- The progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language varies in the same way as all other groups. However, some of these pupils make good progress as their command of the English language increases.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- There has been a lack of rigour in measuring progress in the early years in the past. As a result, it is difficult to determine what progress has been like over time. What is clear is that standards declined over several years, although they improved slightly in communication and language in 2017. Children have not been sufficiently well prepared for their work in Year 1 in the past and, therefore, the early years requires improvement overall.
- New and effective leadership, well-led new staff, a revamped curriculum and new assessment systems are making a big difference this year. Teaching and learning are improving rapidly but it is too soon to see the full impact of the changes because so much is new.



- Overall, children start the Nursery Year with skills below those typical for their age, especially in language and communication. They have settled quickly into the routines set for them and they are becoming confident learners.
- The leadership of the early years is now good. Staff plan effectively together. They give children plenty of opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and to discuss their ideas with each other and with adults. All adults interact well with the children, noting their learning, checking and recording it and encouraging them to learn more.
- Disadvantaged children, children who have SEN and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language are well supported. The early years is a calm, harmonious setting in which children behave well and develop a positive approach to learning. Children's eyes shone as they proudly showed the points they got for good behaviour.
- Staff make good use of the temporary accommodation to ensure that learning continues equally well, indoors and out. Children want to share their learning with adults and they do so confidently, often showing good attempts at reading and counting. For example, they made simple words with one set of building blocks, and counted the bricks and sequenced the colours in another set.
- Staff make sure that children know what they are expected to learn from their activities. This was evident when they brought an inspector a written instruction that accompanied an activity. They sounded out and read the simple words and, when helped with a more difficult word (rhythm), could explain and demonstrate what rhythm was.
- Interacting with the children outdoors, staff were observed teaching the basics of movement, ball skills and road safety, thus ensuring that learning took place through what is perceived as play. Children readily take responsibility for their own learning. For example, one child with a stopwatch was timing others riding round a road, noting down the times and urging them to increase their speed.
- There are many opportunities for children to acquire early writing skills. For example, as they develop their creative skills while mixing colours, they paint letters, and writing tables are set up indoors and out, with activities that encourage writing.
- As part of the curriculum, children now experience focused outdoor learning, which they greatly enjoy, their parents praise and older pupils wish to experience. In this, children learn how to take risks, keep themselves safe in different situations and cooperate and help each other as they learn about nature and extend their reading, writing and number skills.
- Relationships with parents are good. Stay-and-play sessions and open days help parents to become involved in their children's learning. Staff develop strong bonds with the children. They look after children well and make sure that all welfare requirements are met. Safeguarding is effective. The same well-established procedures in operation in key stages 1 and 2 are in operation in the early years, with additional vigilance because of the current building works.

## School details

Unique reference number	105310
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10037754

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

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	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Fitzgerald
Headteacher	Martin van Hecke
Telephone number	0161 766 2852
Website	<a href="http://www.wcp-school.co.uk/">www.wcp-school.co.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:whitefield@bury.gov.uk">whitefield@bury.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	July 2013

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion of disadvantaged pupils.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at different times is above average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- In the early years, Nursery children attend school part-time and Reception children attend full-time. The early years provision had a new leader and new staff in September 2017. It currently operates from temporary accommodation due to ongoing building works.

- The present headteacher took up post in April 2017.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school operates before- and after-school clubs.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of lessons in all year groups. Three observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in key stages 1 and 2 and held discussions with pupils from across the school.
- A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority and the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors also met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body, various leaders, including those responsible for English and mathematics, the early years and for the provision for those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- There were also several meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher about pupils' learning and progress, and how they and the quality of teaching are assessed and monitored.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including records of pupils' attendance and behaviour, the school's checks on teaching, the school's review of its own performance, improvement plans, information about pupils' progress and safeguarding documentation.
- Inspectors also met with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the 13 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View.
- Inspectors also took account of the 12 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and talked with several members of staff on a range of issues relating to pupils' progress.

## Inspection team

Doris Bell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Nusret Elahi

Ofsted Inspector

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