

Whitchurch CofE Junior School

Salisbury Road, Whitchurch, Shropshire SY13 1RX

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Outcomes for pupils have been too low at Whitchurch Junior School in recent years. Pupils' progress across different year groups is not improving quickly enough.
- Not enough has been done to halt the decline in standards, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- There are marked differences between the achievements of different groups of pupils. Teachers' planning is not routinely meeting the needs of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Pupil premium expenditure is not being used effectively to reverse the decline in achievement for disadvantaged pupils.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies too much. Teachers are not ensuring that pupils fully understand what skills and knowledge they are learning.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Some pupils are not adequately challenged, particularly in English.
- The impact that teaching has on standards in reading is not strong enough. Pupils are not sufficiently challenged in their reading. Strategies to improve learning in this area are in place but are very new.
- Some pupils have gaps in their basics skills. These gaps have not been addressed quickly enough by leaders and basic skills are not developed well across the curriculum. Boys are not routinely engaged in all aspects of their learning.
- Leaders and governors' self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is overgenerous. The identification of key issues and the monitoring programme are not rigorous enough.
- Governors are not adequately holding leaders to account for standards within the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have demonstrated that they have the capacity to improve. This is evidenced by: improvements in standards of pupils' writing, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, the development of artistic learning within the curriculum and pupils' behaviour.
- Leaders and governors have made several key appointments designed to address standards in core subjects. New leaders are experienced, enthusiastic and understand key issues.
- Pupils behave well, are proud of their school and cooperate with one another.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, and thereby pupils' outcomes, by ensuring that:
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' achievement
 - teachers' planning takes better account of pupils' SEN and/or disabilities and prior learning, and offers a higher level of challenge across all subjects
 - pupils fully understand what they are learning and the reason why they are learning it
 - pupils' basic skills, particularly in English, are routinely developed through the wider curriculum
 - assessment procedures are developed further so that there is greater triangulation between what pupils record in their books and the outcomes of more formal checks on learning.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
 - self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness has greater rigour
 - key issues are precisely identified, have a clear time scale for development, and are costed and frequently monitored
 - governors offer a higher level of challenge and more fully hold leaders to account
 - leaders have higher expectations of outcomes for groups, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - the impact of pupil premium and SEN funding is fully scrutinised and reviewed
 - the teaching of reading is developed further, is frequently monitored by leaders and secures more rapid rates of progress for pupils.
- Further improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - sustaining the improvements in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils
 - making sure that the interests of pupils, and particularly boys, are developed further so that they have consistently positive attitudes to their learning.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding 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

Inadequate

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that pupils are making strong progress across the curriculum. The school has experienced instability in aspects of its leadership in recent years and standards have not improved quickly enough. As a result, too many pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The school's self-evaluation is overgenerous. Leaders have not used monitoring activities rigorously enough to make incisive judgements about the impact that teaching has on learning. Leaders and governors do not sharply identify key weaknesses through self-evaluation. School development plans lack precision. Planned actions are not costed and it is unclear how developments will be monitored.
- Leaders have not done enough to tackle poor teaching. Progress varies across the school, some teachers do not ensure that pupils are challenged or understand exactly what they are learning.
- There are early signs that some improvement is being secured. For example: staff training is appropriately directed towards addressing key issues; pupils' behaviour is good and fixed-term exclusions have significantly reduced; artistic aspects of the curriculum are creative and very much enjoyed by pupils; and pupils' progress in writing is now closer to national figures. However, several strategies devised to address key issues in core subjects require embedding, and have not yet had a sustained impact on standards. This is particular the case in reading.
- Leaders have not acted quickly enough to address pupils' gaps in learning. The teaching of reading has not been adequately developed over time. As a result, some pupils in upper key stage 2 misspell common words and are not clear about the reading they are developing in lessons.
- Leaders and governors have commissioned reviews of the school's effectiveness to help secure improvements. They state that they have not always found the findings of some of these reviews sufficiently incisive. Some monitoring activities do not adequately identify the school's key weaknesses or the urgent actions that are required to sharply raise standards. As a result, progress has stalled and is not rapid enough.
- Given the low outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, the school commissioned a review of the expenditure of pupil premium. Despite this work, and a range of additional activities to improve outcomes, pupils' progress is not yet rapid enough. Some barriers in relation to pupils' personal development and welfare have been effectively identified and acted upon. However, more work is required to ensure that pupils' progress is accelerated.
- SEN funding is not being used effectively. The school's own assessment information, and work in pupils' books, show that rates of progress are not strong enough. Teachers are not ensuring that the work they set is consistently addressing and developing pupils' needs. Expectations of what pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities can achieve are not high enough. Pupils' learning targets are not rigorous and require more frequent review.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium for primary schools is effectively used.

Additional activities and clubs are ensuring that pupils have wider opportunities to participate in sporting activities. The governing body has established a 'link' member for this aspect of the school's provision. The teacher with responsibility for PE and sport has met with the nominated governor and effectively identified strengths and areas for future development.

- Several new leaders have been appointed to raise standards in English and mathematics. New leaders have significant expertise and experience in their fields. These appointments, and the early impact of some of their actions, demonstrate the growing capacity of leadership as a whole. New leaders recognise that there is important work to do and that the development of reading is a key priority.
- Leaders and governors are passionate about what they do and have the development of the 'whole child' at heart. This is evident through the improvements secured in the wider curriculum. Though there is more to do in ensuring that basic skills are developed across the curriculum, pupils do thrive in some aspects of their learning. Artwork and musical experiences are just two of the strengths of the school. Pupils' artwork adorns the walls, is creative and of a high quality. The outdoor woodland mural and pupils' drawings of animals' eyes are very striking.
- Leaders pay close attention to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's values and Christian ethos underpin all that they do. School assemblies are well received by pupils and important messages are shared with sensitivity and clarity. Pupils have a growing awareness of fundamental British values. Some pupils were not entirely confident when describing their learning about other faiths. However, pupils are confident that it is 'OK' to be different at their school and say that everyone is treated the same.
- The responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, show that some parents hold mixed views about the school's effectiveness. Key parental concerns include the turnover of staff and provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. New teaching and leadership appointments are resulting in greater stability. Provision for SEN and/or disabilities is a key area for development for the school. The school has recently conducted its own questionnaire. Responses to the school's own questionnaire were more positive. Nonetheless, leaders recognise the importance of acting upon feedback.
- Newly qualified teachers (NQTs) state that they are well supported in their roles. The school has organised a programme of mentoring to support NQTs in their first term of teaching. This programme includes opportunities to observe colleagues and attend additional staff training. New members of staff are particularly well trained in matters relating to safeguarding.
- Some parents express satisfaction with the school's work. One parent commented: 'I feel the school is very good at involving parents with their children's learning. We are invited to school every term to see what the children have been doing. It's wonderful to get into the classroom with our children and we are always welcomed by the staff.'
- The local authority has identified the key issues within the school. It has commissioned support to address these areas but the decline in achievement has not yet been reversed. The local authority has not met with leaders to review the effectiveness of provision in this new academic year. Advisers recognise that leaders and governors must employ more comprehensive monitoring activities that have a greater impact on

standards.

Governance of the school

- Governors are passionate about Whitchurch Junior School and understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding particularly well.
- The governing body has commissioned reviews of pertinent areas of the school's provision to seek validation about leaders' actions.
- Governors recognise that not all reviews have provided them with sufficient insight into the actions that must be taken to bring about better outcomes.
- The governing body has not ensured that the self-evaluation or development plans precisely identify the school's key issues.
- Governors have not fully scrutinised and reviewed the impact of additional funding.
- Governors have not sufficiently held leaders to account for outcomes over time but have established greater rigour around the support and challenge offered by link governors.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a large team of professionals in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. Staff are very clear about their responsibilities and know exactly what to do if they have a concern. Staff that are new to the school receive a programme of rigorous induction. Safeguarding training is a priority.
- The school's work within the curriculum and in day-to-day safety measures is effective. This work includes regular fire drills, road safety lessons and additional safety messages for Year 6 as they transfer to high school, as well as anti-bullying assemblies and additional learning through drama and computing.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The impact that teaching has on learning is too variable across the school. In too many classes, pupils are not clear about the skills and knowledge they are learning. Teachers are not routinely checking that pupils are clear about what they are doing and why.
- Teachers' expectations are not yet high enough. There are pockets of stronger practice through the school. However, some pupils are not presented with a sufficient level of challenge in lessons. This is particularly the case in English.
- Some pupils have significant gaps in their learning, particularly in reading. The teaching of reading is not yet effective enough. Pupils are unclear about the reading skills they are developing. Some pupils have gaps in their reading skills that have not been addressed quickly enough over time.
- Some pupils' phonics skills are insecure. As a result, common words are misspelt in pupils' writing and not adequately addressed by teachers. Leaders have identified this

issue and have recently established new teaching strategies to improve the situation. However, strategies are new and leaders have not been quick enough to tackle this weakness.

- Teachers' planning is not ensuring that pupils secure strong progress. Work is not always challenging enough or fully understood by pupils. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are not being as well supported as they should be. Some work is not suitably matched to pupils' needs.
- Assessment systems have evolved to take account of changes at a national level. Greater triangulation is required between work in pupils' books, observations of teaching and the outcomes of tests to ensure that teachers' judgements are secure. Work in pupils' books does not show consistently strong progress.
- Improvements to progress in mathematics have been made as a result of effective staff training and a focus on reasoning and problem solving. Due to some changes in staff, this work is not yet fully embedded but the teaching of mathematics is an improving aspect of provision. In after-school workshops, teachers have supported parents to develop their understanding of how the school teaches different operations. These workshops are well attended.
- The school's approach to homework is underpinned by practical activities and opportunities for pupils to access online learning. In a recent project, pupils were invited to build models that show the different layers of a rainforest canopy. Pupils' models are detailed and of a very high quality.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. Pupils have respect for their teachers and enjoy coming to school. However, on occasion, some boys are not as attentive or as engaged as other pupils. Teachers do not always address this issue quickly enough.

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 are confident and self-assured. However, in many classes, pupils are unable to clearly describe the skills or knowledge that they are learning. Pupils sometimes confuse the stimulus for their learning with the aim or outcomes that have been devised by the teacher. As a result, pupils are not able to readily articulate what they are learning and getting better at. This hampers the progress they are able to make.
- Pupils are well supported physically and emotionally. The PE and sport premium funding enhances opportunities for pupils to participate in sport. Some skilled support staff are on hand to help pupils make the right choices and improve their behaviour.
- Pupils state that teachers handle any concerns about bullying well. Leaders' records show that there are very few incidents of poor behaviour or bullying.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct throughout the inspection was good. Pupils are courteous and well-mannered. They cooperate with one another well on the playground and enjoy many well-planned activities at lunchtime. The school's table tennis resources are a particular favourite of the pupils. Pupils organise themselves into doubles teams and patiently wait to take turns.
- Levels of attendance have improved. Historically, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils with persistent absence has been high compared to the national average. In the last year, attendance of this group has improved considerably.
- The proportion of pupils who have had fixed-term exclusions has declined over the last three years and there have been none in this academic year.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Outcomes have declined in recent years. Achievement in reading and mathematics has not been good enough. Very few pupils reach a higher standard of attainment by the time they leave in Year 6.
- The achievement of particular groups of pupils is also too low. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are not catching up with their peers quickly enough or making sufficiently strong progress.
- Pupils' books do not yet demonstrate that the school has successfully halted this decline. Pupils' progress varies between different subjects. Work is not well matched to pupils' needs or challenging enough. However, outcomes are stronger in writing by the time pupils leave at the end of key stage 2. Pupils' progress in writing is now closer to national figures. This demonstrates leaders' capacity to secure improvements.
- Pupils' basic skills are not well developed through the wider curriculum. Teachers provide pupils with some valuable opportunities to develop mathematical skills in the curriculum. However, the development of writing across the curriculum is not as strong. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their writing skills in subjects such as history and geography.
- The gaps in pupils' phonics skills have not been addressed quickly enough in the past. Older pupils misspell common words, and their teachers do not routinely address these errors.
- As a result of pupils not securing consistently strong progress through key stage 2, some are not adequately prepared for the next stage of their education.

School details

Unique reference number	123514
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10037886

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	341
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Rylands
Headteacher	Ms Diana West
Telephone number	01948 662255
Website	www.whitchurch-jun.shropshire.sch.uk
Email address	admin@whitchurch-jun.shropshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 January 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about 'governance roles in other schools' on its website.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school operates a breakfast club before school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. Leaders conducted some observations jointly with the lead inspector. Inspectors undertook a book scrutiny with leaders during the inspection. Inspectors took account of learning in pupils' books from every year group.
- Meetings were held with leaders to discuss the school's effectiveness in the following areas: inclusion, personal development, behaviour and welfare, attendance, safeguarding, the curriculum and use of additional funding.
- Inspectors took account of the following responses to questionnaires: 19 from staff, 21 from parents on free-text, 32 from parents on Parent View, and none from pupils. Inspectors spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection and held a separate meeting with a small group.
- The lead inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector met with the school improvement adviser from Shropshire local authority.

Inspection team

Jonathan Keay, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ian Beardmore	Ofsted Inspector
Adele Mills	Ofsted Inspector

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