

# Whitehouse Common Primary School

Cotysmore Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B75 6BL

## Inspection dates

14–15 December 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership. Pupils, parents and carers, and staff are in full support of her clear vision.
- Senior leaders are a cohesive team and they secure successful improvements to the quality of teaching. Staff feel well supported to develop their classroom practice.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive. As a result, pupils' personal development is extremely well catered for.
- Middle leaders are proactive and make positive improvements to their areas of responsibility. They receive good-quality training from leaders and feel trusted to lead.
- By the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics is high.
- A high proportion of pupils achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Governors are passionate and have a good understanding of the school's strengths. However, governors' understanding of pupils' progress and attainment is not strong enough to provide robust challenge to leaders.
- Senior leaders analyse pupil assessment information thoroughly and effectively. Some middle leaders do not have a strong grasp of trends in pupils' attainment and progress.
- Teachers use precise subject knowledge to help pupils acquire new skills confidently. Staff use probing questions so that pupils develop a deep understanding of what they are learning.
- Pupils enjoy reading widely and often. Reading comprehension skills are taught well, which boosts pupils' progress.
- Occasionally, teachers do not provide a sufficient level of challenge for middle and high-attaining pupils. Consequently, their progress slows, particularly in key stage 1.
- Teachers' good use of practical apparatus helps to deepen pupils' mathematical understanding. Pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to apply and record their mathematical understanding into reasoning problems.
- Pupils love the interesting curriculum topics. They develop effective skills, knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour in class and during social times is outstanding.
- A wonderful range of enrichment activities contributes strongly to pupils' outstanding personal development.
- Children get off to positive start in the early years. They enjoy the range of stimulating activities and make good progress.

## Full report

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

- Strengthen leadership and management, by:
  - making sure that governors improve their understanding of trends in pupils' attainment and progress so that they can challenge leaders more effectively
  - ensuring that middle leaders have a consistently strong understanding of trends in pupils' attainment and progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching and boost pupils' progress across the school, but particularly in key stage 1, by:
  - making sure middle- and high-attaining pupils are provided with work that offers a consistent level of challenge
  - providing pupils with sufficient opportunities to apply and record their mathematical understanding into reasoning problems.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher leads with clarity and purpose. Her ambition to achieve the best for the pupils is a prevalent characteristic of the effective leadership in the school. She is very well supported by a cohesive and proactive senior team. They know the school well and focus on appropriate priorities for improvement. Parents, staff and pupils are unanimous in their support of leaders and the direction of the school. Good leadership contributes strongly to the well-rounded education that pupils receive.
- The senior team places a clear focus on developing the expertise of other leaders. In-house training and nationally accredited training courses help leaders to refine their practice. Leaders benefit from taking on new areas of responsibility, so that they can transfer leadership skills into different subject areas. Middle leaders have a positive impact on their areas of responsibility and feel empowered to make improvements.
- Leaders use effective checks in order to make successful improvements to the quality of teaching. Observations of lessons and checks on quality of work in pupils' books provide precise feedback to teachers on how they can refine their practice.
- Staff appreciate the range of activities in place to help them to improve. Leaders arrange high-quality training aligned to priorities in the school development plan. Performance management is used effectively to set appropriate targets and identify personalised training for staff. Consequently, the quality of teaching is continually reflected upon and improved.
- The senior leadership team has effective systems for analysing the attainment and progress of pupils. Senior leaders work well with teachers to identify where particular pupils require additional support in order to catch up in their learning. They have a strong understanding of this assessment information. However, some middle leaders have an emerging understanding of trends in pupils' progress within their areas of responsibility. Consequently, they are not able to fully analyse weaknesses and where they might need to intervene.
- Leaders have developed effective partnerships with other schools in a local cluster. A range of activities, such as training and moderation, enable staff to learn from others. Equally, aspects of good practice at Whitehouse Common Primary School have been shared and used across other schools in the group.
- Pupil premium funding is used well. Leaders and staff closely monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils and put in place thoughtful strategies to enable them to thrive. For example, disadvantaged pupils' progress has been boosted by additional support provided in reading.
- Leaders have established an excellent partnership with parents. Communication is very effective and parents feel well informed about their children's learning. Comments received from parents during the inspection typified this view: 'It is a fantastic school, we are provided with regular updates on our child's learning', and 'It's a welcoming school, you can ask them anything. Our child's confidence has really come on.'
- Pupils enjoy their interesting and relevant curriculum. Staff design learning experiences and arrange trips which help to hook pupils into their topics. Pupils spoke

knowledgeably about the impact that these experiences have on their learning. For example, a topic in Year 5 focused on a local area study of Birmingham where pupils learned about the history of the city and the industrial revolution. Leaders have also used nationally recognised awards as a vehicle to improve different aspects of the curriculum. For example, an accreditation in science was used to improve the quality of science teaching. Pupils enjoy using their designated science laboratory in school to carry out good-quality science investigations. As a result of the thoughtful curriculum, pupils develop effective skills, knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects.

- The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used well. Specialist coaches are used to enhance the delivery of PE lessons and extra-curricular sports clubs. Pupils' attendance at the broad range of clubs is high. Pupils also get the opportunity to take part in regular competitions against each other in school and against other schools.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely well catered for through an extensive range of enrichment activities. For example, an impressive array of extra-curricular clubs, such as cookery, choir, martial arts and mathematics, are well attended by pupils.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and they have a good understanding of British values. For example, pupils speak with sensitivity and respect when describing the differences between particular religions.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are passionate and committed. They want the best for the school and have a good understanding of its strengths. The chair of the governing body is knowledgeable and provides effective leadership. For example, he has ensured that performance management for the headteacher is thorough and uses an external adviser to help set and review robust targets.
- The chair of the governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment and progress. However, other governors' understanding of this information is not strong, so they cannot provide a sufficient level of challenge to leaders. Furthermore, governors' meeting minutes lack evidence of probing questions to leaders, particularly in relation to the analysis of assessment information.
- Governors are proactive and make regular visits to the school in order to check that aspects of the school development plan are being implemented.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, staff and governors ensure that pupils' safety and welfare is at the core of the school. The designated safeguarding leaders provide regular training and check that staff understand their responsibilities. As a result, staff are knowledgeable and quick to report any concerns that they have about a child. Leaders follow up concerns tenaciously and involve external services in a timely manner. Record-keeping is thorough and accurate.
- Governors have a good understanding of their statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

The designated safeguarding governor carries out regular checks and works in close partnership with the safeguarding leads in school.

- Leaders ensure that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Staff use the computing curriculum and internet safety week to teach pupils about the dangers associated with internet. Pupils know exactly what to do if they were concerned about something online.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Strong relationships between staff and pupils provide an extremely positive learning environment. Pupils enjoy learning, work hard and make good progress.
- A key characteristic of the effective teaching is the accuracy of teachers' subject knowledge when introducing new learning to pupils in English and mathematics. Teachers give clear demonstrations and examples. As a result, pupils acquire new skills confidently and precisely.
- Staff use searching questions to deepen pupils' understanding and enable them to think for themselves. Questions are used well to clarify misconceptions or check how well pupils have grasped learning during lessons.
- Most learning activities are appropriately challenging for pupils. However, sometimes middle-attaining and higher-attaining pupils, particularly in key stage 1, carry out work that is too easy. When this occurs, their progress slows.
- There is a positive culture of reading across the school. Phonics teaching is precise and enables pupils to learn new sounds efficiently. Pupils enjoy reading widely and often. The school's reward system motivates pupils to read books from a range of different authors. Reading comprehension is taught well and enables pupils to demonstrate that they have a deep understanding of the texts that they read. Reading records between home and school are also used well.
- Teachers provoke a sense of curiosity and excitement among pupils when teaching writing. Pupils develop and apply an appropriate range of vocabulary and punctuation in their writing as they move through the school. They enjoy writing for a purpose and apply their writing skills well across the curriculum.
- Leaders and staff have put in place a thoughtful approach to mathematics teaching. Pupils enjoy using practical apparatus when learning new and challenging concepts. For example, pupils in Year 3 made a cuboid out of sticks and marshmallows. They used this to demonstrate a deep understanding of key mathematical language, such as the edges, vertices and whether an edge was perpendicular to another. Teachers have also ensured that pupils have acquired efficient mental and written calculation skills.
- Pupils solve reasoning problems verbally in class. However, work in pupils' books showed a lack of opportunities for pupils to record and apply their understanding of problems involving reasoning. As a result, pupils are not being sufficiently challenged in this aspect of mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and lower-attaining pupils are very well supported in class and through additional support. Staff plan activities with appropriate levels of challenge and make good use of resources to

support their progress.

- Teachers make good use of their learning environment in their classrooms. Displays are used well to celebrate pupils' work and to share key prompts for learning.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

## **Outstanding**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are superb. They are diligent and demonstrate self-will to be the best learner they can be. Pupils relish opportunities to reflect on their targets for improvement. They can clearly articulate what they need to do next, before making the necessary refinements to their work. These attitudes and skills ensure that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next phase of education.
- Pupils talk with maturity and pride about their school. They appreciate the range of enrichment opportunities and how it impacts upon their learning. During a discussion with an inspector, comments included, 'Our trip to Tamworth Castle helped us learn about our topic, but also how to cooperate with each other out of school.'
- Pupils' moral and social development is very well catered for through a range of leadership responsibilities, such as the eco-council, school council, head boy/girl, sports leaders and house captains. Pupils are proactive and enjoy having a voice in the school. Wider projects, such as raising money for charities and work with the Rotary Club in the community, add further value to pupils' personal development. Pupils collaborate well and show sensitivity for each other's point of view.
- A wide-range of musical opportunities has a positive impact on pupils' creativity and confidence. Pupils receive whole-class brass lessons and individual music lessons with a range of instruments and there is an extra-curricular choir. They also perform to different audiences on a regular basis. Performing arts is a positive feature of the school.
- Leaders and staff plan regular opportunities to teach pupils how to keep themselves safe from harm. The school council has displayed posters to give pupils tips on how to stay safe at home and at school. Pupils are very clear about the different forms of bullying and how to seek help if they have a concern.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times is excellent. They are extremely well mannered and respectful to staff and to one another. Their considerate attitudes are a key feature of the positive ethos that resides in the school.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare and when they occur pupils often correct their actions before an adult has to. Adults focus on rewarding positive behaviour, which motivates pupils to want to work hard and behave well.
- Leaders have a very good handle on behaviour in the school. They analyse trends in

incidents for individuals and groups of pupils in order to put in place additional support for pupils who have complex needs. Leaders' information shows that incidents have reduced over time as a direct result of their support for pupils.

- Overall attendance across the school is high and well above the national average. Leaders manage attendance thoroughly and offer high-quality support to families where their child's attendance has declined. The attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils have been low historically. However, this was due to some exceptional circumstances. Since September, their attendance has risen significantly.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils' work in their books, along with the assessment information and statutory test information, demonstrates that pupils make good progress across all year groups.
- A high proportion of children enter and leave Reception achieving the expected and higher standards for their age, often above levels seen nationally. At the end of Year 6 pupils attain well, with a high proportion achieving the expected and higher standards for their age. Pupils' high attainment is sustained as they move through school.
- At the end of Year 1, a high proportion of pupils achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check. This has been above the national average for several years.
- At the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards has been above levels seen nationally for two years. In 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standards was lower than the national average in reading and in line with the national average for mathematics. This represented slow progress for the most able pupils when considering their prior attainment. However, in 2017 at the end of key stage 1 these figures improved and were just above the national average. Occasionally, some of the middle and high prior-attaining pupils are not consistently challenged to meet the expected and higher standards by the end of key stage 1.
- Pupils make good progress on their journey through key stage 2. In 2016 at the end of Year 6, progress in reading, writing and mathematics was similar to the national average. In 2017, this same measure accelerated in reading and mathematics and the progress score was well above the national average. In writing in 2017, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 was above the national average.
- There are low numbers of disadvantaged pupils, so assessment information for this group of pupils was analysed with caution. Disadvantaged pupils receive targeted support, enabling them to diminish gaps in their learning and make good progress.
- Pupils' writing books show clear evidence of good progress over time. Assessed pieces of writing at the start and end of a teaching sequence demonstrate clear progression in pupils' writing skills. This was most noticeable for some of the most able pupils, whose language and punctuation choices are highly sophisticated.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress, often similar to or better than other pupils nationally. They are challenged effectively in lessons and through precise additional support.
- Pupils develop a broad range of skills, knowledge and understanding in other subjects. This is particularly strong in science, where pupils show increasing skill when carrying

out scientific enquiries.

## Early years provision

Good

- Children get a good start to their education in the early years and they are well prepared for Year 1. Strong bonds between children and staff enable children to feel safe, happy and settled.
- Good-quality teaching in the Nursery prepares children well for their Reception Year. A high proportion of pupils enter Reception with skills, knowledge and understanding that is typical for their age. By the end of Reception most pupils achieve the expected standards across the different areas of learning. Children make good progress during their time in the early years.
- The most able children are challenged effectively and during their Reception Year the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standards increases positively.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the setting. For example, leaders recognised that staff needed support to improve the quality of interactions with children during play. Training was put in place for staff and there is clear evidence of its impact. Staff do not intrude on children's play, but provide good questions and add new language to accelerate their learning.
- Leaders ensure that assessment is accurate through regular opportunities for moderation. Staff carry out regular observations of children's play and work, so that they can plan their next steps carefully. Leaders' analysis of assessment information could be even more precise. This would enable leaders to better identify and accelerate the progress of pupils at risk of not achieving a good level of development.
- Teaching in the early years is precise and enables children to develop skills accurately and confidently. Phonics is taught well and pupils are challenged to acquire new sounds at an appropriate rate. Teachers introduce new learning in writing and mathematics skilfully, so that children can see what success looks like. Children then get opportunities to practise these skills through play and through focused activities with an adult. Learning journeys reflect the good progress that children make, particularly in their writing.
- Children's imagination and interest are captured through the range of activities that they carry out. Staff often plan learning based upon children's interests. Children are always very clear about what they have to do in activities and they show high levels of independence and creativity in their work. Children are more than happy to play independently or cooperate well with others in their play.
- Leaders and staff have worked very hard to create a highly positive learning environment. Children's work is celebrated with pride on display and areas of the classroom are very well resourced to support children's play.
- Staff communicate very effectively with parents. As a result, parents feel well informed about their children's learning in the early years.
- All statutory welfare requirements are met.



## School details

Unique reference number	132007
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10025253

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	475
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Crosson
Headteacher	Deborah Allen
Telephone number	0121 4641918
Website	<a href="http://www.whitehousecommon.bham.sch.uk">www.whitehousecommon.bham.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiry@whitehousecommon.bham.sch.uk">enquiry@whitehousecommon.bham.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	14 November 2012

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 28 lessons or parts of lessons. A number of these observations were undertaken with senior leaders.
- The inspectors scrutinised work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met with two groups of pupils to gain their views of the school. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and at the end of the school day, as well as in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, as well as other senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and three other governors.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including assessments and records of pupils' progress. They also scrutinised the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance, records of how teaching is monitored and the school's improvement plans.
- Inspectors took account of 97 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors considered 14 free-text responses from parents. They also talked to parents at the start and end of the school day. Inspectors evaluated 30 responses from the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Matt Meckin, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lynda Townsend	Ofsted Inspector
Justine Lomas	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Quinn	Ofsted Inspector
Amarjit Cheema	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](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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