

Whytemead Primary School

Dominion Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN14 8LH

Inspection dates

24–25 April 2018

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

- Leaders have not ensured that all groups of pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable across the school. Teachers do not provide activities which consistently build on pupils' prior learning.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' learning are not consistently high enough. Sometimes, time is wasted. Teaching, including in early years, typically lacks challenge, particularly for the most able.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers, particularly in key stage 2, have a full understanding of what pupils need to achieve to reach the higher standards.
- Children in the early years, as elsewhere in the school, do not make the strong progress they should.
- Leaders' and governors' monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education, and their plans for school improvement, are not sufficiently rigorous.
- The role of middle leaders is not developed sufficiently for them to play an effective part in school improvement.
- Leaders recognise the need to improve still further the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher leads the school with passion and determination. Together with his deputy, he has created a nurturing, welcoming school community in which pupils feel safe and well cared for.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted effectively. A strong ethos of respect exists throughout the school; this is reflected in pupils' good behaviour.
- Parents and carers have confidence in the work of the school. They hold the school in high regard.
- Leaders' work to improve the achievement of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils, is proving effective. These pupils now make increasingly good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all groups of pupils make consistently strong progress across a range of subjects and throughout the school by making sure that:
 - pupils benefit from consistently effective teaching
 - all leaders, governors and teachers develop a better understanding of the higher standards expected, especially in key stage 2
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils, especially the most able, can achieve
 - teaching enables pupils to practise, consolidate and deepen their learning
 - best use is made of time to maximise learning
 - attendance continues to improve, especially for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve leadership by:
 - ensuring that an effective culture of monitoring and evaluation is deeply embedded
 - strengthening the skills of middle leaders so that they are can lead the pace of change more rapidly
 - ensuring that school development plans include timely milestones so that leaders and governors can check the progress of improvement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders' work to improve the school as it has grown into a primary school has not ensured that teaching, learning and assessment are good. Although leaders acknowledge that too few pupils work at the higher standards, they have been slow to recognise that teaching, including in the early years, is not routinely challenging enough, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Leaders are developing the system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, but monitoring is not systematic. Feedback to teachers is not precise enough to help them improve the quality of learning in their lessons. As a result, there remains too much variability in the quality of teaching.
- Plans for school improvement usually focus on appropriate aspects. However, the lack of timely milestones, linked to pupil achievement, hinders leaders' and governors' ability to check the impact of actions taken.
- All school leaders are committed and keen for the school to improve. The headteacher and deputy have provided good support, especially to new leaders. However, there is more to be done to ensure that all leaders have the skills needed to play a full part in the school's improvement.
- Leaders have recently changed the way they check pupils' progress over time, and they now analyse assessment information carefully. They keep a close eye on individual pupils' achievement. This helps leaders and teachers to put in place support for pupils who have fallen behind in their learning.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is used well to promote pupils' emotional well-being and personal development as well as their academic progress. For example, less-confident pupils benefit from additional support, such as the counselling and play therapy sessions, or by taking part in team activities such as a cooking group. Pupils develop self-confidence in this nurturing environment. In these ways, the school provides effective support to vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils benefit from a curriculum which has been designed to make learning fun and meaningful. There are some motivating enrichment activities; pupils are particularly excited about the residential visits in both Year 4 and Year 6. Pupils also enjoy learning science. This was seen during the inspection, where pupils were keen to find out how the liver and the digestive system work. Work in pupils' books shows that this type of practical activity is typical of the way pupils learn science through investigation.
- Although there is a broad range of subjects on offer to pupils, too often activities do not allow pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Leaders have not ensured that learning builds progressively so that pupils develop their knowledge and skills effectively.
- Leaders are, rightly, proud of pupils' sporting achievements. The physical education and sport premium is used very effectively to support pupils' physical development and their enjoyment of school. There is a wide range of sports clubs, both at lunchtime and after school. Sports teams have been successful in tournaments, including football, gymnastics and cross-country competitions. The positive impact of this is evident; this

year, around half of all pupils have taken part in an out-of-school sports competition.

- British values are promoted well. Adults are good role models and pupils learn to be kind to each other. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities by becoming 'safety squirrels', 'eco-warriors' or play leaders. Pupils show respect to each other as well as to the environment. Pupils were keen to talk to inspectors about their 'beach clean', when they visited the local coast and then wrote to the local MP about caring for the environment.
- Promoting pupils' personal development lies at the heart of the school's work. This is a very inclusive school where pupils are well cared for. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. As a result, pupils feel valued. Parents appreciate the work of the school. A typical comment, 'Whytemead has a lovely, caring, community feel', sums up the views of many parents.

Governance of the school

- As the school has expanded into a primary school, governors have been supportive of school leaders and have ensured that necessary changes to staffing and buildings have been managed smoothly.
- Governors show a high level of commitment to the school. They make frequent visits, talking to staff and pupils to find out about everyday school life. They observe meetings between leaders and staff to discuss pupils' progress. In these ways, they learn about how policies work in practice. However, governors have an overgenerous view of the performance of the school. This is because they do not have enough understanding of the standards that pupils need to reach to be successful, especially the higher standards in key stage 2.
- Governors take their role seriously, especially their responsibility to keep pupils safe. For example, following a survey of parents, governors carried out a review of the anti-bullying policy to make it more robust.
- Governors ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively. For example, they check to make sure that the additional training for teaching assistants results in better progress for disadvantaged pupils. Governors keep a close eye on the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and know that the additional help these pupils receive supports improvements in their progress. Governors know how the additional funding for sport helps to increase pupils' participation in physical activity.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils feel safe. Parents agree that their children are safe and happy in school. Parents value the headteacher or deputy headteacher welcoming them at the school gate each morning. This gives parents an opportunity to talk to school leaders and share any worries they may have.
- Leaders have successfully created a culture where everyone knows the importance of keeping pupils safe. Rigorous checks on new staff, supported by timely training and updates, ensure that staff know what to do if they are concerned that a pupil may be

at risk of harm.

- The school is an orderly, well-organised environment. Playtimes are well supervised. Leaders ensure that visitors to the school understand the systems to keep pupils safe. As a result, pupils learn and play safely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent, and this had led to variations in pupils' progress across the school. Teaching does not build strongly on pupils' prior learning in English, mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well enough to set work which fully takes into account the needs of different groups of pupils. Too often, pupils, especially the most able pupils, are given work that is not sufficiently demanding.
- Teachers want pupils to do well, but their expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Teachers do not yet have a full understanding of what pupils need to know and understand to reach the higher standards. Sometimes, teachers do not make the best use of time to maximise learning; when lessons are too long, pupils lose focus.
- Teaching assistants provide a good balance of support and challenge for pupils who need extra help. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and pupils who are disadvantaged are beginning to catch up with their peers.
- Teachers work hard to make their classrooms bright and well organised. High-quality displays celebrate pupils' work and reflect the varied activities which pupils enjoy.

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 polite and self-assured young people. They show respect to each other and to adults.
- Pupils and parents speak highly of teachers and appreciate the care they provide. Staff 'go the extra mile' to promote pupils' emotional well-being. A palpable sense of care permeates the school, with staff very aware of pupils who may be feeling anxious or unhappy. The good-quality support provided by adults enables pupils to grow in confidence and feel secure.
- All staff, and the very large majority of parents who completed the online survey, agree that pupils are safe in school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe. For example, pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep safe when using the internet. Pupils also understand the need to eat sensibly and keep fit in order to stay healthy.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and know that bullying can take different forms. They say that, although pupils sometimes 'fall out', bullying is rarely a problem for them. They are very confident that adults would not tolerate any bullying or unkind behaviour. School records show that incidents of bullying are rare, but that when they

do occur they are managed effectively by leaders and staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Playtimes are sociable. Pupils readily share the good range of equipment provided, such as bats, balls and hoops. Pupils behave well in lessons and in assembly. They move around the school sensibly.
- Pupils work well with partners and in small groups, taking turns to contribute their ideas. They happily help when their partner is 'stuck' with their work. This good behaviour contributes well to the school's overall harmonious atmosphere.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy school, and most have good attendance. Leaders follow up absence tenaciously. This has improved the attendance of individual pupils, especially those who now attend the school's breakfast club. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities still lags a little behind other groups.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2017, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 were broadly similar to the national figures. However, this represented variable progress from pupils' starting points.
- The proportions of pupils reaching the higher standards at the end of Year 2 in 2017 were lower than the national averages. Too few pupils made the accelerated progress they needed in order to reach the higher standards. As elsewhere in the school, this is because there is not sufficient challenge to move pupils' learning on quickly.
- Work in pupils' books shows that inconsistencies in teaching have led to a variation in the progress that pupils make. Where pupils make good progress they are, for example, practising their writing in longer pieces, exploring their thinking in mathematics and writing explanations in science. However this is not evident across the school. As a result, the quality of pupils' learning is patchy in English and mathematics, as well as in a range of subjects.
- The most able pupils do not learn well enough. Too many do not develop the deep understanding needed to achieve the higher standards. In Year 6, work in pupils' books shows that too few of the most able pupils are working confidently at the higher standards expected for their age.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They are keen to use the school library and read books from the classroom. Pupils speak confidently about the books they have read. Older pupils told inspectors how important it was to read the recommended books on the 'brilliant booklist'.
- Over time, the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been at least in line with the national average. Work in pupils' books shows that current Year 1 pupils are on track to achieve standards similar to those achieved nationally.

- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities currently in school achieve increasingly well. This is because timely support is targeted to meet their needs.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- As with other year groups, teaching does not provide a consistently appropriate level of challenge. As a result, children, especially the most able, do not make the strong progress that they should. Too few reach the higher standard of which they are capable. As elsewhere in the school, expectations of what children should achieve are often too low.
- Although adults make regular, accurate assessments of children's learning, they do not make good enough use of this information in order to plan learning that moves children's learning on quickly.
- There are some recent improvements. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of Reception has risen over the last two years. In 2017, it was above the national average. This means that most children reach the standard needed to be prepared for Year 1.
- The early years leader has established clear routines and positive relationships. These ensure that children feel happy and secure. Parents appreciate this good level of care. Typical comments included 'Very happy with my choice of school – wouldn't want my child to be anywhere else' and 'Exceptionally pleased with the high level of care'.
- Teaching provides a range of interesting activities across all areas of the early years curriculum. For example, during the inspection, children enjoyed finding numbers in the sand pit, collecting sticks and worms in the 'forest school', writing about a story character and playing with the water tray. Records of children's learning show that these types of engaging activities are typical.
- Children behave well. They learn to take turns and play happily. They respond quickly to adults' instructions and, for example, tidy their equipment and sit on the carpet sensibly when asked.
- The classroom and the outdoor area are safe and well organised. The leader ensures that safeguarding arrangements are effective.

School details

Unique reference number	125861
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10046535

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John O'Hara
Headteacher	Gavin Ward
Telephone number	01903 202 639
Website	www.whytmead.w-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	head@whytmead.school
Date of previous inspection	5–6 December 2013

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, when the school catered only for pupils in early years, key stage 1 and Year 3, the school has expanded into a primary school. This year, for the first time, the school has a cohort of Year 6 pupils.
- The school is now average-sized. There are three mixed-aged classes in key stage 1 and six mixed-aged classes in key stage 2.
- Children in early years are taught in two full-time Reception classes.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- There is a breakfast club, run by the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors evaluated learning across the school. Many lessons were visited jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- During visits to lessons, inspectors spoke with pupils and looked at their work to find out how well they are learning.
- Inspectors looked at a large sample of pupils' books across a range of subjects to evaluate pupils' learning in English, mathematics and across the wider curriculum. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading, and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors talked to groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning to find out what it is like to be a pupil at Whytemead. Inspectors also considered the 79 responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during lunchtime. An inspector attended an assembly.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, a representative from the local authority and a group of governors.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents gathered from the 56 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the 35 free-text responses. An inspector also had conversations with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors took account of the 14 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including those related to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, the school's evaluation of its own performance, and the school's development plans.

Inspection team

Joanna Toulson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Claire Martin-O'Donoghue	Ofsted Inspector

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