

# Whittle Academy

Narberth Way, Off Woodway Lane, Coventry, West Midlands CV2 2LH

## Inspection dates

6–7 June 2018

<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>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher has quickly established an ambitious culture in the school, which all staff and pupils share.
- Senior leaders and governors relentlessly focus on continuous improvement, while being mindful of staff's and pupils' well-being.
- Leaders at all levels share the headteacher's drive to provide the best possible education and care for pupils. Leaders new to their posts receive targeted support to develop their skills from Inspire Education Trust staff.
- Teaching has improved across the school. Where teaching is strongest, pupils make rapid progress to fill gaps in their knowledge and skills. Pupils now need more opportunities to work in depth and apply their learning to new situations.
- Attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 were below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the majority of pupils in all year groups, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, are now making good progress. Leaders agree that the assessment system needs to be more flexible to allow evidence of progress to be captured more accurately.
- Children in the early years make rapid progress. Adults provide exciting learning opportunities, which help children to develop independence quickly.
- Pupils' conduct is exemplary. Clear expectations help them to understand how to behave and why this is important.
- Parents and carers value the nurturing ethos of the school. They know their children are safe, happy and keen to learn. Most parents feel part of the school community. A small minority of parents feel that this could be further developed.
- The environment, indoors and out, is lively and stimulating. All areas are well looked after and used effectively to support pupils' learning and well-being.
- The curriculum is creative and engaging. Termly themes begin with exciting 'wow' activities. As a result, pupils are keen to learn, and attendance is improving.
- Additional funding such as the pupil premium and the physical education (PE) and sports funding is used well. More pupils now take part in after-school activities and sporting competitions. Leaders know that pupils would also benefit from more enriching artistic and cultural experiences.

## Full report

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

- Improve progress and attainment further, particularly at key stage 2, by ensuring that:
  - all pupils benefit from rich experiences that enhance the curriculum
  - existing excellent teaching and leadership practice has a wider influence in developing teaching, learning and assessment across the school
  - as pupils progress, they have more opportunities to apply their learning when undertaking more extended tasks
  - all parents are fully engaged as part of the school community so that they are better able to support their children’s learning.
- Further strengthen leadership by ensuring that:
  - support for leaders is reviewed so that they continue to benefit from appropriately targeted opportunities to develop their skills while extending their influence further
  - the current assessment system is refined so that it better suits the needs of the school and its current context.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Despite the fact that many leaders are relatively new to their posts, leaders at all levels demonstrate strong capacity for continuous improvement. The headteacher's drive and determination motivate others to strive for all pupils to achieve their potential, regardless of their starting points.
- The executive principal of the trust lends effective, strategic support to the school, particularly to the headteacher. Together, they provide inspirational leadership and direction for the school. The school's journey of improvement has not always run smoothly, but, through the rapid pace and impact of more recent changes, leaders demonstrate that they have the capacity to drive forward further improvement quickly. The trust directors, the local governing body and the local authority adviser all confirmed their confidence in the leadership team.
- Middle leaders across the school lead their areas very well. They monitor the quality of teaching and provide effective support for teachers, which has improved the quality and consistency of teaching. They know how well pupils are progressing, and introduce carefully chosen initiatives to address any weaknesses. These strong leaders, working alongside excellent teaching and learning support from the Inspire Education Trust, are bringing about rapid improvement.
- The curriculum, which is well designed, is a strength of the school. It is underpinned by a clear rationale, which promotes learning in a broad range of subjects in addition to English and mathematics. Through themed topics, pupils develop generic skills and characteristics such as resilience and teamwork. Where appropriate, topics are closely related to the local context of Coventry to foster pupils' pride in their local heritage.
- Themed topics start with an exciting enrichment activity such as a trip or a visitor. Pupils then follow an investigative approach to learning, supported by extended 'POWER' homework projects. Pupils talked enthusiastically about how they love learning in this way. Work in pupils' theme books is well presented and shows their pride in their work. Opportunities to apply mathematical skills across the curriculum are evident, as well as opportunities for extended writing. 'POWER' projects extend the learning beyond school and help to involve parents more closely in their children's learning.
- Pupils benefit from in-depth science topics. As a result, they have a good understanding of the processes of scientific investigation and a love of science. They enthusiastically described to inspectors a recent trip to the National Space Centre.
- The large majority of parents are positive about the school and are effusive in praising improvements they have seen since the current headteacher took up her post. They particularly appreciate the 'real community vibe' in the school.
- Leaders have already increased the number of parental workshops and other opportunities for parents to be involved in the school. Attendance at parents' meetings has increased. Despite this, a minority of parents feel that leaders have not responded positively to feedback in the past. Leaders are working hard to engage all parents, but acknowledge that this is still a priority for improvement.

- The number of recorded behavioural incidents is reducing term on term. Leaders record and monitor incidents rigorously to identify patterns. They act promptly to address trends as they develop. For example, staff noticed an increase in play fighting and identified that some pupils were enacting a violent computer game. Leaders informed parents promptly of the risks and reminded them about age-appropriate guidance for games. Teachers reminded pupils in assembly, and the problem was resolved.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They recognise the improvements that have already been made and are realistic about the challenge to maintain these and improve further. They do not take at face value what leaders tell them. They visit school often to meet with teachers and leaders to discuss progress against action plans for individual subjects and areas of responsibility.
- Governors have been recruited strategically to ensure that a wide range of skills and expertise is represented on the local governing body. The minutes of governors' meetings show that governors ask increasingly challenging questions.
- Governors work closely with leaders to monitor the use of additional funds such as the pupil premium. They receive reports about the impact of the funding and visit school to see for themselves how pupils are benefiting.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safety and well-being of pupils are a high priority across the school. Leaders have established a culture of vigilance where all staff are aware of the risks to pupils and alert to the signs of abuse or neglect. They are supported well to report their concerns and assess the level of risk. Leaders and other staff are not afraid to escalate their concerns with external agencies if necessary, and have done so on several occasions to ensure that pupils are protected from harm.
- Safeguarding practice is enhanced by a comprehensive programme of support for pupils' social and emotional well-being, which helps pupils to understand their feelings and manage their behaviour.
- Pupils feel safe. They know that in the 'sunflower room' there is always an adult to talk to if they feel unhappy or worried.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- The quality of teaching across the school has improved significantly in a relatively short time. It is now consistently good with some exceptional practice. Leaders have high expectations. As a result, there is consistency across the school in the use of effective teaching approaches and established routines.
- Teachers have clearly benefited from effective training and support. In mathematics,

for example, leaders introduced a new scheme, which is already having an impact on pupils' progress. Pupils said that they love the new scheme because 'it really makes you think more'.

- Teachers explain ideas clearly and model problem solving effectively for pupils. They ask challenging questions such as 'How do you know?' and ask pupils to prove how they arrived at their answers. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Pupils have many opportunities to discuss their learning and thinking, which helps them to clarify how they will tackle a problem. They use subject-specific vocabulary with confidence.
- The school has focused on developing reading areas and promoting reading for pleasure and purpose. Pupils said that they enjoy reading, and enthusiastically change their books in the library once a week. Teachers develop pupils' language, reading and communication skills across all subjects and use all opportunities to promote reading, including supporting parents to promote reading at home. As a result, pupils read fluently and with good expression.
- Teachers have high expectations of presentation and, as a result, work in pupils' books is almost universally neat and well presented. Pupils take great pride in their work, much of which is on display around the school. Work in pupils' theme books demonstrates that these high expectations extend across all areas of the curriculum in most classes.
- While teaching and learning have improved, there is room for further improvement so that all practice is as good as the best.
- Teachers use assessment information and pupils' prior learning well to inform next steps in their teaching. Leaders track and monitor pupils' progress and attainment rigorously. However, leaders agree that the assessment system does not currently allow leaders to capture the full range of pupils' progress and attainment. They are already exploring how their system can be adapted to make it more flexible and manageable.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils said that bullying is rare and, if it happens, adults resolve it quickly. They talked confidently about how to stay safe online. They were able to recall assemblies and lessons where this was discussed, along with healthy relationships, road safety and stranger danger.
- Pupils' well-developed learning skills help them to become more independent as they progress through the school. They collaborate through discussion to find solutions to problems together.
- Pupils understand and respect different cultures and faiths. Displays around the school celebrate the diverse range of home languages spoken by families in the school community and their religious faiths. Pupils readily said, 'It is OK to be different in this

school.'

- Staff are extremely caring towards the pupils. They deal with any behaviour issues calmly. Pupils said that teachers model how to be good friends by the way they talk to each other. This is reflected in pupils' behaviour. For example, one child in Nursery reminded another, 'Remember, sharing is caring.' Pupils learn how to be 'the best they can be' through 'Yoimoji' characters. Each character represents a different characteristic such as bravery or resilience.
- The school council is well established. Pupils understand democracy and fundamental British values well. The school council provides opportunities for them to vote on school matters, such as after-school activities and having class pets.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils play football and basketball, take turns on the trim-trail, or talk to the chickens. Pupils from Reception to Year 6 play happily together. Older pupils are happy to help and support younger children as they learn how to play together.
- Pupils demonstrate mature and responsible attitudes to behaviour and learning. They return to their classrooms after break and lunch in an orderly fashion, with minimal staff supervision. They demonstrate to teachers that they are ready to settle back to learning.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and assemblies is exemplary. Learning is very rarely disrupted due to poor behaviour. When teachers escort classes to assembly, pupils do not need reminding to listen. They sit quietly and attentively.
- Pupils are motivated by earning reward points and golden tickets. Recently, some pupils who won golden tickets went with the executive principal to buy chickens and a henhouse for the school grounds, which they thoroughly enjoyed.
- Leaders are taking effective and appropriate action to tackle poor attendance. As a result, attendance overall is improving. Individual pupils with previously low attendance have been supported well to improve their attendance. The school works supportively with parents to overcome any barriers to attendance, such as transport difficulties or medical needs. Leaders work closely with external agencies to use appropriate sanctions such as parental fines when necessary.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 were below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders and governors are aware of the reasons for this and have taken decisive action to improve outcomes this year.
- In upper key stage 2, work in pupils' books, observations in lessons and current assessment information all demonstrate that almost all pupils are now making rapid and sustained progress. Any remaining gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are closing as a result of high expectations, appropriate challenge and effective feedback. Pupils respond well to teachers' feedback, which helps them to improve the accuracy of their writing.

- The recently introduced mathematics scheme has already had an impact on the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard for their age and the proportion achieving at greater depth. There is consistency in the teaching of mathematics because the subject leader monitors the implementation of the new scheme well. Work in pupils' books shows confidence and independence in the application of mathematical skills.
- Standards at the end of key stage 1 improved in 2017. The proportions of pupils who attained the expected standard were broadly in line with national averages in both reading and writing and above the national average in mathematics.
- Those pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 in 2017 are now making rapid progress to catch up by the end of Year 2, despite their low starting points. Strong teaching and a concerted focus on improving pupils' reading skills, including parental support, have brought about rapid improvements. Work in pupils' books demonstrates strong progress.
- In the early years, the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development in 2017 increased compared with 2016 and was broadly in line with the national average. As many children enter Reception with skills that are well below those expected for their age, this represents good progress from their low starting points.
- Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils in most year groups are closing quickly as a result of leaders' relentless focus on eradicating underachievement and inequality. Leaders have used the pupil premium funding effectively. They have put in place rigorous systems to support teachers in identifying barriers to learning and helping pupils to overcome them.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2017, the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities was well below national averages in reading and writing. However, in most year groups, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are now making stronger progress as a result of improved strategic leadership and more targeted interventions. Leaders acknowledge that this is still an area for improvement.
- Teachers' judgements of the proportion of pupils working at, above or below age-related expectations have been checked against other local schools.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The quality of provision in the early years is good. The early years leader is a strong practitioner, who has a positive impact on staff within the phase, as well as more widely across the school, within the multi-academy trust (MAT) and beyond.
- Children benefit from very effective teaching and support across Nursery and Reception. Teachers and other adults are skilled in delivering high-quality experiences for children. They intervene appropriately to develop children's learning by guiding rather than directing them. No opportunity for learning is lost. At snack time during the inspection, pupils learned about shapes while cutting up their toast.
- Children behave very well, showing enjoyment in their learning. They cooperate and share effectively, taking their lead from staff as strong role models. They help each other willingly. For example, two children worked well together shifting logs with wheelbarrows. Other children were planting seeds with support from a teaching

assistant, using gardening equipment such as forks and spades. They used the equipment sensibly and were supported well by adults to understand and manage the risks. Leaders have ensured that the provision is compliant with the early years welfare and safeguarding requirements.

- The teaching of phonics is strong across the early years. There is a clear, graduated programme in place to ensure a smooth transition into key stage 1. Teachers use effective strategies to ensure that all pupils are able to engage and contribute during phonics teaching sessions. As a result, children enjoy phonics sessions and make good progress.
- When reading aloud, children demonstrate a broad range of reading and phonics strategies and are able to apply their phonics skills confidently.
- Current children are making good progress, and some are making rapid progress. The quality of children's writing in the early years is impressive. After visiting Warwick Castle, children in the Reception class wrote about the visit using 'first', 'next' and 'then' to structure their sentences.
- Teachers use assessment information effectively to inform their planning. They capture children's learning using an online system, which parents can access from home. Parents are encouraged to contribute evidence of learning at home online, which many of them do, even in the school holidays.

## School details

Unique reference number	142039
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10048368

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	261
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Eileen Leech
Headteacher	Pamela Carpenter
Telephone number	02476 610167
Website	<a href="http://www.whittleacademy.org">www.whittleacademy.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@whittleacademy.org">admin@whittleacademy.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Whittle Academy joined the Inspire Education Trust in May 2015. The local governing body is accountable for standards and performance, and reports to the board of directors of the trust. An executive principal oversees all schools in the trust. Each school has a headteacher. The expertise of key members of staff is shared across the trust.
- Whittle Academy is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British families.
- An increasing proportion of pupils are from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly higher than the national average.
- A higher-than-average proportion of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than the national

average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. Most lesson observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team.
- Inspectors met with pupils, heard a selection of pupils read and observed pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the early years leader, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), and middle leaders who have subject responsibilities. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and spoke to a local authority representative.
- Inspectors reviewed work in pupils' books from a range of year groups and subjects.
- A number of documents were considered, including the school's improvement plans and self-evaluation. Inspectors also considered information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents before school and at the end of the school day and took account of 36 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors considered 34 responses to the staff survey and 42 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gareth Morgan	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey O'Keeffe-Pullan	Ofsted Inspector

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