

# Whitehill Primary School

Whitehill Street West, Heaton Norris, Stockport, Cheshire SK4 1PB

## Inspection dates

11–12 December 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>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The focused and effective leadership of the headteacher and the new senior leadership team has led to considerable improvements across the school since the previous inspection.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. Adults provide stimulating activities that engage and interest children. As a result, children make good progress across all areas of learning.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is taught well. Younger pupils read and pronounce sounds, and write the letters that these sounds represent, with confidence.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are respectful towards each other. They have positive attitudes to learning and say that they feel safe.
- Attendance has improved for most pupils. They enjoy coming to school. However, a minority of pupils are absent from school too often.
- Over time, pupils' progress across key stage 2 has been steady rather than good. Stronger teaching means that pupils are making better progress than they have in the past. However, older pupils are still making up for gaps in their learning from weaker teaching in the past.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for further improvement.
- The changes made to the teaching of reading are embedded. However, some pupils do not routinely read at home. This leads to a lack of fluency and slows their progress.
- The quality of teaching has improved. It is now good. Gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are being identified and activities are planned accordingly.
- Pupils gain a good understanding of number and calculations. However, some older pupils do not have the confidence to explain how they solve problems.
- Middle leaders have settled well into their roles and are driving improvements in their areas of responsibility. This is raising standards across a range of subjects.
- The headteacher has implemented a new curriculum across the school. Pupils are given numerous opportunities to develop their English and mathematical skills in science and topic work.
- Subjects in the wider curriculum such as geography and history are brought to life through regular trips and visits beyond the local community.
- The vast majority of parents speak positively about the raft of improvements made by the headteacher and leadership teams.

## Full report

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

- Improve pupils' outcomes, especially in key stage 2, by:
  - embedding the changes made to the teaching of reading, so that a higher proportion of pupils read more fluently and work at the expected and higher standards, by the end of Year 6
  - building the confidence and skills of some parents to enable them to help their children with reading at home
  - helping older pupils to build their confidence when explaining how they have solved mathematical problems.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that staff continue to work with the few parents whose children's progress is interrupted by too many absences from school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and assistant headteachers are ambitious for the school and its community. Staff and governors share this ambition, as do pupils. Older pupils told inspectors they know that learning is at the heart of helping them to secure a good job in the future. Pupils aspire to work in a range of professions including the health service, law and education.
- The senior leadership team has brought about significant improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection. Parents see the evidence of this from their children's books. Senior leaders have introduced new whole-school approaches to the teaching of English and mathematics. They provide high-quality training and support for teachers and teaching assistants. For example, the approach teachers use to develop pupils' writing has had a significant impact on the quality of writing both in English and across the wider curriculum.
- Leaders and governors are focused on raising the profile of reading for pleasure both across the school and at home. They have invested in a new library with high-quality fiction and non-fiction books. The online system for borrowing books allows leaders and teachers to monitor, by class and by individual pupil, the frequency and type of books being taken home.
- Middle leaders have successfully implemented whole-school changes using new schemes of work for the planning of teaching and learning in their subjects. This has ensured that pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum which enables them to develop skills and knowledge across a range of subjects. Middle leaders work with teachers to monitor the progress of pupils and plan individualised support when pupils need additional help.
- Senior and middle leaders check the effectiveness of teaching and learning through thorough systems that are in place across the school. Leaders carefully measure how well pupils are progressing in their learning. Where areas to improve are identified, leaders ensure that well-planned training and support is put in place.
- Arrangements for performance management are effective. Leaders and governors challenge underperformance and have eradicated weaker teaching. Senior leaders are positive role models for those teachers in the earlier stages in their careers, supporting them to extend their skills and to improve their practice.
- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium funding is now used well to benefit disadvantaged pupils. There are specific interventions to support learning and to enable this group of pupils to participate in a broad range of opportunities, such as a programme to develop pupils' social and emotional resilience. The impact of this breadth of support is helping this group of pupils to catch up with their learning.
- Additional funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is used well. Staff implement individual education pathways that address the specific needs of a pupil, with bespoke support from teachers and teaching assistants. When needed, the school sources external professional support from a wide range of agencies with whom staff work well.

- Leaders use the specialist funding for physical education and sports to build pupils' confidence and teamwork. For example, there are coaching sessions from sports specialists who work with pupils and develop the skills of staff. During the inspection, boys and girls were excited to be going to another school to take part in a football competition.
- Leaders have planned and embedded a broad curriculum for pupils which includes religious education and personal, social and health education. Visits and visitors bring learning to life when learning about other cultures, tolerance and British values. Teachers ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is integrated into the curriculum.
- Pupils' progress is improving strongly across different subjects. Pupils have more opportunities to practise their reading and writing skills through a range of different topics planned by teachers, and pupils clearly find this engaging. Opportunities to develop mathematical skills in science are evident. For example, pupils used graphs to plot their pulse rates during an experiment and then analysed the data to draw valid conclusions.
- Although there are workshops for parents on how to support their children with reading at home, there are still some children who do not read often enough beyond school. This hinders their progress in becoming fluent readers. Most parents recognise the positive changes brought about by the headteacher and are very appreciative of the impact on their children and the community.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and the areas to develop further. They have stood shoulder to shoulder with the headteacher in making several whole-school changes, including restructuring the senior and middle leadership teams, to bring about marked improvements.
- Governors bring with them a range of skills that are used to good effect to support and challenge the work of the senior leadership team.
- Governors are proud of the way in which staff and pupils welcome families who are new to the school, community and, in some cases, this country.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All statutory checks are in place to ensure the suitability of adults working in school. Appropriate checks are made on visitors when they arrive at the school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' safety is a high priority and that staff are vigilant. They make sure that staff receive regular and appropriate training to identify any signs of possible danger or potential abuse. Leaders have created a safe and caring culture in which pupils feel confident that they have someone to talk with if they are worried. Pupils spoken with during the inspection said that they feel safe in school.
- The procedures for reporting any incidents or concerns are very clear and understood by staff. The headteacher and learning mentor continue to work with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils who are not in school are safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching in the past did not ensure that pupils made good progress. This is no longer true. However, some pupils are still living with the legacy of weak teaching which they have to overcome to ensure that they can make the progress that they should by the end of key stage 2.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge contributes well to pupils' progress and learning. Teachers use information on pupils' progress to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding and to plan activities accordingly. They plan a range of stimulating activities and sequence pupils' learning well.
- Phonics teaching has improved. Teachers use a range of strategies that maintain pupils' interest. Staff receive comprehensive training so that they all have a strong understanding of how the system for developing pupils' phonics knowledge works. Adults' pronunciation is clear and concise. This leads to pupils making sounds accurately themselves. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2018 was significantly higher than previously and much closer to the national average.
- Leaders have raised the profile of reading across the school. Pupils are encouraged to review and share with others the books that they have read. Teachers carefully choose books to read in class that are of a high quality and stimulate the interests of girls and boys alike. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught well in English lessons and these are reinforced across a range of other subjects.
- Staff training in the school's new approach to the teaching of writing is working well. Pupils are enthusiastic writers. The quality of work that they produce has improved significantly during the last academic year. Pupils practise their writing skills across topics such as the Anglo-Saxons and the Second World War and improvements in pupils' handwriting skills are evident.
- In mathematics, pupils have a good understanding of number and their written calculations are accurate. Teachers take steps to develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. However, some pupils lack the confidence to explain the strategies that they have used to solve mathematical problems. Teachers quickly address misconceptions and make sure that pupils are secure in their knowledge. As a result of improvements in teaching mathematics, pupils' attainment is rising.
- The minority ethnic achievement teacher from the local authority provides bespoke staff training and works with individual pupils for half a day each week. This is having a positive impact on the progress that these pupils make, particularly with reading.
- The new SEND coordinator provides tailored training to develop the skills of class teachers and teaching assistants to support pupils who need additional help with their learning. In addition, external support is sought and used well to cater for those pupils who have more complex learning needs.
- Teaching assistants work well in classes, supporting individual and small groups of pupils. They work closely with teachers and adopt a similar, positive approach in their interactions with pupils. Volunteers provide another valuable resource for those pupils who are not reading regularly enough at home.

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff know pupils and their families very well. The emotional needs of vulnerable pupils are met well through a varied range of initiatives and opportunities. External agencies work with individuals and classes where the needs are greatest.
- Pupils report that incidents of bullying are very rare, and staff deal quickly with any misbehaviour, which is seldom.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe, both online and in the wider community. The pupils spoken with during the inspection are confident that staff listen to any concerns that they have and take action to help them.
- Staff teach pupils to be thoughtful and considerate to others. Pupils take part in charitable fundraising events. They show respect for each other and the environment. Pupils can turn to 'young ambassadors' to raise any worries that they may have.
- Pupils are given opportunities to develop their independence and resilience. The 'Friday Academies' encourage pupils to take part in team-building activities and to enjoy new experiences, such as military fitness, dodgeball, drama and cookery. Teachers carefully plan visits linked to topics each half term for every class. Pupils spoke animatedly about visiting a museum in Manchester, a safari park and experiencing the confines of an air raid shelter. These types of visits broaden pupils' knowledge and bring learning to life.
- Through the curriculum, pupils develop a clear understanding of how to choose a healthy lifestyle. At lunchtime, pupils told inspectors about the importance of a balanced diet and regular exercise. Pupils talked excitedly about taking part in after-school clubs such as guitar and different sports clubs.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Senior leaders have worked hard to create and successfully implement a new behaviour policy which clearly sets out high expectations across the school. This has had a positive impact and has led to significant improvements in behaviour. Pupils are polite and very welcoming and are a credit to their school. Staff have created a warm and friendly atmosphere and pupils clearly enjoy being in school. Pupils care for each other and are respectful to adults.
- Staff, pupils and parents agree that pupils behave well. In classes, pupils listen attentively and work cooperatively. They are keen to learn new things.
- The headteacher and learning mentor work tirelessly with families to improve pupils' attendance. Although rates of attendance are now much closer to the national average, there are still some pupils who do not attend school regularly. This hinders their progress considerably.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement because historically weak teaching has hampered the progress and attainment of some pupils over time. Although most current pupils are now making strong progress, some pupils, especially those in Year 5, continue to have gaps in their skills and knowledge which are hindering their overall academic success.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 was low. Almost two thirds of this group were not as well prepared for their secondary school as they should be. However, pupils' attainment in 2018 is not a typical picture over time. A high proportion of this group did not enter school until Year 5 or 6 and therefore they had too little time to benefit from the improved quality of teaching. Nonetheless, some pupils in this year group did not achieve as well as they should, due to the wide gaps in their learning which they amassed during their time key stage 2. Current assessment information and the work in pupils' books clearly indicates that pupils' attainment is much stronger than the 2018 results suggest.
- Pupils' progress across key stage 2 has improved since the previous inspection. This is due to the stronger teaching that they receive. Nevertheless, in 2018 pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 was not good enough. This is due to a legacy of underachievement in the past.
- Across current year groups in key stage 2, most pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, although they still have some catching up to do.
- Standards at the end of key stage 1 in 2018 showed a decline compared to the previous two years. A third of this cohort did not have the benefit of early years provision at this school as they joined during Years 1 and 2. Those who did benefit from this school's early years provision made good progress during key stage 1. Pupils in current Years 1 and 2 are making good progress due to the consistently good-quality teaching that they receive.
- Leaders ensure that stronger reading outcomes at the end of the early years and in Year 1 phonics are being built upon as pupils move through the school. Senior leaders are providing support for teachers and teaching assistants to identify gaps in pupils' learning and to modify their planning appropriately.
- Pupils from Years 2, 4 and 6 read to the inspectors and it was clear how well pupils use their phonics skills to work out unfamiliar words. Several older pupils read with fluency and expression and were able to discuss aspects of what they had read. The positive impact of improvements to develop pupils' understanding of what they are reading is evident across key stage 1 and key stage 2. However, a legacy of weaker teaching when pupils were younger, and some pupils not reading often enough beyond school, means some older pupils are not fluent readers.
- Pupils are beginning to express their ideas more fully when writing for different audiences in their English work. The quality of most pupils' writing shows good improvement. This is a direct result of the improvements to the quality of teaching and how trips to places beyond school provide new experiences from which pupils can draw upon to make their writing interesting and purposeful.



- Over time, too few of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, reached the standards that they should for their age and ability. However, recent changes to teaching are beginning to help these pupils to make stronger progress.
- It is evident that older pupils have gaps in their mathematical knowledge and, for example, some are not secure in explaining how they have solved mathematical problems.
- Scrutiny of disadvantaged pupils' work in their books, listening to them read and evaluating case studies show that they are now making strong progress with their learning. Leaders carefully monitor the progress of individuals and hold regular reviews of the effectiveness of interventions.
- Progress for pupils with SEND is improving across different years groups. Leaders instigate early help from a private consultant and from the local authority to support pupils and their families.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and who have had no previous experience of speaking English are provided with additional support both from within school and from the local authority. They are absorbed in developing their vocabulary and progress quickly from their individual starting points. Pupils enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum alongside their peers and quickly learn about British values and global issues.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The proportion of children in 2018 who achieved a good level of development was close to the national average, demonstrating a significant improvement on recent years. Given that many children enter school with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age, this represents good progress over time. Improvements in the early years is a result of effective leadership and management and good-quality teaching which captures children's imagination and enthusiasm for learning.
- Staff have a good understanding of the early years and ensure that the children get off to a good start. They know the children and their families well. The quality of teaching is strong. Accurate use of the assessment of children's achievement informs the planning of activities for children well.
- Children's individual development is captured in detailed assessment records which clearly highlight the good progress that children make. The 'learning journeys' provide a good mix of evidence, for example photographs, notes on focused observations and pieces of children's work: these are shared with parents. Parents also contribute to these learning journeys by sharing what their children do beyond school. This helps staff to plan how children can develop further.
- The learning environment in the classroom and outdoor area is well resourced. Staff plan activities well and provide children with a wide range of experiences which cover all areas of their learning. Staff develop children's interests and are proactive in providing support and challenge.



- Children show that they are highly interested in their learning. They have good learning habits, following routines and listening well. For example, those preparing ingredients to make a vegetable soup demonstrated care and safety when using knives. They carefully listened to the teacher as she demonstrated how to chop the vegetables. Good questioning by the teacher helped them to think about the order in which they were going to make the soup. Activities such as this contribute to pupils' confidence and skills in acquiring new language.
- Behaviour is good. Excellent transition arrangements prior to starting school help children to settle extremely well into school life and routines. During the inspection it was clear to see how happy the children are to come to school and this was reflected in conversations with parents. From an early age, children show respect for each other, the adults around them and visitors to the school.
- Welfare requirements are met. The provision is well staffed. It is a safe environment and all statutory school policies are in place, ensuring that pupils are safe and feel safe.

## School details

Unique reference number	106084
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10046071

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Thompson
Headteacher	Steven Hall
Telephone number	0161 4802142
Website	<a href="http://www.whitehill.stockport.sch.uk">www.whitehill.stockport.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@whitehill.stockport.sch.uk">admin@whitehill.stockport.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	18–19 May 2016

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is more than double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is higher than the national average.
- Over a quarter of the pupils joined the school during the last two academic years.
- The school operates breakfast and after-school clubs for pupils.
- Since the last inspection there has been a restructuring of the senior and middle leadership teams. A new SEND coordinator was appointed in September 2017.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Several sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher and with the two assistant headteachers.
- The inspectors met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, and with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also met with the minority ethnic achievement teacher who works for the local authority.
- The inspectors held a meeting with a group of pupils from key stage 2 and talked with pupils in classes and around the school.
- The inspectors listened to a small number of pupils from Years 2, 4 and Year 6 read.
- A range of pupils' books and tracking records were scrutinised with the leaders of English and mathematics.
- The inspector spoke with a number of parents to seek their views. The 14 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were analysed along with 13 parents' free-text responses.
- The inspector scrutinised a variety of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, records of governing body meetings and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. A range of documentation regarding safeguarding was also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Claire Hollister

Ofsted Inspector

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