

Whitstone Community Primary School

Oak Lane, Whitstone, Holsworthy, Devon EX22 6TH

Inspection dates

26–27 March 2019

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
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| 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 | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Governors and school leaders have not ensured that the priorities identified in the previous inspection have been addressed fully.
- Subject leadership and the quality of teaching have not been developed consistently well over time. As a result, teaching, learning and pupils' progress are too variable across subjects.
- Recent improvements in writing are not being sustained across key stage 2.
- The quality of teaching is also uneven across year groups. This leads to pupils not making consistently strong progress throughout the school, particularly in key stage 2.
- The new headteacher is taking appropriate action to improve teaching and learning. However, some teachers feel overwhelmed by the rate of change.
- High levels of staff absence, in particular the absence of some subject and other middle leaders, are hindering improvement in teaching and learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is raising teachers' expectations of pupils' progress. She is developing the curriculum successfully to better engage boys in their learning.
- Teaching in key stage 1 is effective in securing consistently strong progress for all pupils across year groups and subjects.
- For the past two years, all pupils attained the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years and are prepared well for Year 1.
- Effective subject leadership in mathematics has led to year-on-year improvements in pupils' progress, especially by the end of key stage 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils are catching up with others in the school and nationally in mathematics and reading.
- Pupils behave well and are considerate towards others. Their attendance is improving and it is now in line with the national average.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils say they feel safe in school. Parents, carers and staff agree.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils make consistently strong progress across year groups and subjects, especially in key stage 2 and in writing, by:
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge and raising their expectations of what the pupils can achieve
 - sharing the effective practice in key stage 1 of matching the level of challenge to pupils' learning needs, and checking and extending their understanding during lessons
 - enabling pupils to demonstrate their thinking and learning in their writing through using increasingly sophisticated vocabulary and sentence structure.
- Drawing on the good example in mathematics, develop other middle leadership roles to improve consistently the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - developing the leaders' skills in monitoring and evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress
 - enabling the leaders to keep up to date with subject developments and to support the continuing professional development of the other teachers
 - monitoring and supporting leaders' improvement planning to ensure that actions are appropriately paced and lead to improvements in teaching, learning and pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, senior leaders have not ensured that middle leadership and the quality of teaching have been developed consistently well. This has led to pupils' variable progress across subjects and year groups.
- Leadership in English has not kept up to date with subject developments or developed teachers' subject knowledge in writing, particularly in key stage 2. The development of leadership and writing were areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders have not used the effective leadership skills in mathematics, especially in monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress, to develop other subject leaders. The roles of early years foundation stage leader and special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) have yet to be developed.
- The new headteacher is tackling appropriately weaknesses in teaching and learning and improving the curriculum. However, improvements have been hindered by a high proportion of staff, including subject leaders, being on long-term absence.
- The rapid pace of change since September has led to many staff feeling that their workload is too heavy. Some staff reported that too many curriculum initiatives have been introduced at the same time and without sufficient training or support. The inspection found that improvement planning identifies appropriate continuing professional development for staff, including in writing, which is being provided. However, the absence of effective leadership in some subjects means that staff are not as well supported as they would otherwise be.
- Governors are providing effective support for the headteacher in developing a strategic leadership structure. In the interim period, roles and responsibilities are being suitably reviewed to provide support for the staff in the teaching of English.
- The headteacher is ambitious for all pupils. Her priorities for school improvement are relevant. They are based on an accurate understanding of the quality of education in the school, as well as feedback from parents and pupils. The priorities include teaching and learning, with writing as the main focus, the curriculum, leadership and partnership with parents and the community.
- The headteacher has introduced a suitable system to monitor pupils' progress, which is being used rigorously. It is raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and informs regular progress meetings with teachers. It also helps to identify appropriate actions to address any underachievement of pupils, including more effective deployment of support staff.
- The use of the pupil premium and funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is being appropriately reviewed. It is being focused more closely on addressing pupils' specific barriers to learning, especially their limited language skills. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is rising in mathematics and reading.
- The headteacher is leading a review of the curriculum, which is successfully improving

pupils', and particularly boys', attitudes to learning. Curriculum themes begin with an event or experience which motivates the pupils to learn, such as a visit from zoo staff and animals. The events make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is enhanced by a variety of clubs and visits. It also prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils learn about democracy, the rule of law, respect and tolerance of others through activities such as voting for the school council, debates, visits from the police and other services, links with a school in India and learning about other faiths.
- The curriculum includes increased opportunities for sport and outdoor learning, which are improving pupils' well-being. The sport premium is being used effectively to increase pupils' participation in a wider range of sport and to develop teaching skills.
- All leaders and staff promote equality of opportunity and diversity. This results in a positive school culture.
- While some parents raised concerns about their children's progress in key stage 2, almost all parents would recommend the school to others.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has appointed an interim chair of governors while it continues to try to recruit to the post.
- Over time, governors have not held senior leaders to account successfully for the school's performance, particularly in English.
- Current governors have an in-depth knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement gained from a range of sources, including from local authority reports and their own visits to the school.
- Governors challenge and support the headteacher to secure school improvement and make sure that performance management is effective. They ensure that funding provides value for money and improves pupils' progress. They are aware of the improved use of the pupil premium and sport premium.
- Governors check that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and applied vigilantly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Up-to-date and regular training for all staff enables them to confidently identify pupils who may be at risk, including from radicalisation and extremism, and to report their concerns. Leaders provide effective support for the pupils and involve external agencies when necessary. Records are well maintained, including the single central record of the required checks on staff and volunteers.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Over time, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has been too variable to secure pupils' consistently strong progress across subjects and year groups, particularly in key stage 2.
- Across key stage 2, teachers' knowledge of progress in sentence structure is not as well developed as their understanding of progress in mathematics. Their expectations of what the pupils can achieve in writing are not high enough.
- Pupils in key stage 2 are not yet applying their learning in grammar, punctuation and spelling well when writing across subjects. This was identified as an area for improvement in the previous inspection.
- The good practice in key stage 1, especially of matching the level of challenge to pupils' learning needs, is not yet shared across all year groups in key stage 2.
- A recent review of the mathematics curriculum is helping teachers across the school to match the level of challenge in this subject more closely to pupils' prior learning. It is also ensuring that teachers and pupils make more effective use of a wider range of resources.
- Through working with staff in other schools in the trust, teachers are increasing the accuracy of their assessment of pupils' work.
- Strengths in the quality of teaching in key stage 1 include secure subject knowledge, high expectations and suitably challenging work for all pupils. The curriculum is planned and sequenced carefully to promote pupils' progress. Time in lessons is used productively. Questioning is used skilfully to check and extend pupils' understanding. Staff quickly intervene to support pupils who start to fall behind.
- The effective teaching of phonics enables pupils to tackle unfamiliar words. Improvements in the teaching of reading throughout the school include daily reading to an adult and an increased focus on developing pupils' comprehension.
- All teachers give feedback in line with the school's assessment policy. They also set homework that enhances pupils' learning, particularly in reading. Informative workshops and booklets help parents to support their children's reading at home.
- School reports inform parents clearly about their children's progress, how well they are achieving in relation to the standards expected and what they need to do to improve further.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Positive relationships between pupils and with staff help to promote pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are eager to learn and contribute well to lessons. They take pride in the presentation of their work.
- Pupils work and play well together. They respect each other's ideas and views.

- Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents agree. They learn how to stay safe, including when using technology and social media, for example through e-safety days and visits from the fire and police services.
- Pupils say there is very little bullying in school. They are confident that staff would deal well with any concerns they might have.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good, and staff, pupils and parents agree.
- Pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day, including at lunchtime.
- The school is an orderly environment. Pupils respond well to teachers' expectations of their conduct. Low-level disruption of lessons is rare.
- Pupils are aware of significant improvement in the behaviour of others who have particular behavioural needs. Records confirm that these pupils are supported well in managing their behaviour.
- The headteacher has successfully improved pupils' attendance. She ensures that any absence is followed up promptly and makes good use of the local authority education welfare officer. The headteacher regularly sends letters home to parents informing them about whether their child's attendance is satisfactory or not. Other effective strategies include awarding prizes and trophies for good attendance. Attendance is now in line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Current pupils' progress is not consistently strong across subjects or year groups, particularly in key stage 2 and in writing.
- The progress of current disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND is catching up with that of others in mathematics and reading. However, these pupils are making less progress in writing than others, particularly in sentence structure and use of vocabulary.
- Some pupils who had average prior attainment are also not able to demonstrate their thinking and learning in their writing through using increasingly sophisticated vocabulary and sentence structure.
- Pupils' progress was average across subjects in 2018 by the end of key stage 2. It was stronger in mathematics than in reading and writing, and in the top 20% of schools. Progress improved in writing, which, in the previous two years, had been in line with the bottom 20% of schools. Disadvantaged pupils made particularly strong progress in writing, although this improvement is not being sustained currently.
- Attainment was average overall in 2018 in both key stages 1 and 2. More pupils than previously attained the higher standard. The most able pupils currently in the school continue to work at greater depth.
- Pupils read widely and often. This is increasing their fluency and comprehension and enables them to discuss favourite authors and books. For the past two years, all pupils

in Year 1 achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check.

- Given their progress in mathematics and reading, most pupils are appropriately prepared for secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- The headteacher has quickly gained an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the early years provision. She has robust plans for its improvement and for links with the pre-school, including staff training. However, improvements are hindered by long-term staff absence.
- Children's needs, for example in speech and language, are identified early and they are supported well. Effective use is made of external agencies when necessary.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff are well trained, including in paediatric first aid. Child protection policies and procedures are implemented consistently and practice reviewed and evaluated regularly.
- As in key stages 1 and 2, the curriculum has been appropriately reviewed. It provides a broad range of interesting and demanding experiences that meet the children's needs and help them progress towards the early learning goals. Staff suitably plan around the children's interests and the children joined in the whole-school visit from the zoo.
- The headteacher ensures that the quality of teaching remains good, including by regularly teaching in the Reception class herself.
- The adults working in the class have high expectations based on accurate assessment of the children's knowledge and skills when they joined the school. Regular assessments of children's learning and development are used effectively to plan suitably challenging activities.
- Parents make a positive contribution to the initial assessment. They are kept well informed about their children's progress and are encouraged to support their learning at home.
- The children are motivated by the broad range of activities. They are keen to learn and listen carefully to the adults and each other.
- Children's behaviour is good and shows that they feel safe. Children learn about people in the wider world, and learn to respect each other's differences, through celebrating events such as the Chinese New Year, Diwali and Easter.
- Over time, children make consistently strong progress. They are prepared well for Year 1.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 111941 |
| Local authority | Cornwall |
| Inspection number | 10055203 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 72 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Andrew Wood |
| Headteacher | Hannah Mould |
| Telephone number | 01288 341 241 |
| Website | www.whitstone.cornwall.sch.uk/ |
| Email address | secretary@whitstone.cornwall.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | April 2018 |

Information about this school

- Whitstone Community Primary School is maintained by the local authority. Its work is directed by a governing body. The new headteacher joined the school in September 2018.
- The school federated with the Bude Communities' Schools' Trust in 2012. The new headteacher receives support from the local authority and the trust.
- A pre-school shares the school's site. As the pre-school is under separate management, it was not part of this inspection.
- The school is much smaller than most primary schools. Pupils in the early years foundation stage are taught in the Reception class. The other pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND who are supported by the school is well below

average. Very few pupils have an education, health and care plan.

- Most pupils are of White British heritage. Very few speak English as an additional language.

Information about this inspection

- Together with the headteacher, the inspector observed pupils' learning in all classes, examined their progress over time in a sample of books and listened to some pupils reading.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, some governors, a group of pupils, the proposed new SENCo and the mathematics leader, who has now taken over the leadership of English. She met with a few parents informally and held telephone conversations with the interim chair of governors and a local authority officer.
- The inspector examined a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan and documents relating to pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspector took account of the 22 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the written responses from 13 parents. She also took into consideration the responses to the online survey completed by eight staff. None of the pupils completed the online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Sue Frater, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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