

Inspection of a good school: Whitemoor Academy (Primary and Nursery)

Bracknell Crescent, Whitemoor Estate, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG8 5FF

Inspection dates:

24–25 September 2019

Outcome

Whitemoor Academy (Primary and Nursery) continues to be a good school.

However, the inspector has some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders put pupils' well-being at the heart of all they do. They prioritise pupils' safety and happiness. Staff give pupils a high level of care and attention. They share leaders' ambitions for all children to shine and to do their very best. Leaders make sure that staff work together to support pupils and families. Parents value this, with one saying, 'The school is 100% wonderful.'

Pupils get lots of opportunities to do new things. They go to theatres, visit York and meet authors. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say that they love to spend time together and join in with the wide range of after-school clubs on offer.

Pupils and parents agree that behaviour is good. Staff work hard to make sure that pupils are polite and respectful. I saw many smiling pupils holding doors open for adults and saying hello. Pupils enjoy having praise postcards sent home, or golden letters for always doing the right thing. Some pupils say they have been bullied. They say that when this happens, staff deal with it quickly and it does not happen again.

Pupils should be doing better than they are in some subjects. Not all pupils learn to read well enough. Some pupils struggle to remember what they have been taught. Children do not always get off to a good start in the early years.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school's phonics programme is not well sequenced. Phonics knowledge is not taught in a logical order, particularly in the early years. Teachers do not use the same strategies or language when modelling how to read words. Some children find this confusing. Teachers do not ensure that some pupils' reading books are well matched to their phonics knowledge. Too many pupils read books that are too difficult. This results in some pupils not being able to read fluently in Years 2 and 3.

Leaders work hard to establish a love of reading. They offer workshops to parents. They encourage pupils and parents into school every morning for 'book and bagel' time. Pupils take home exciting books to read with their parents. Pupils enjoy listening to teachers read stories to them. They gasp at the suspense when teachers end the session on a cliff hanger.

The school's mathematics curriculum is strong in key stages 1 and 2. Leaders and teachers know the knowledge pupils need to have, and how this should build over time. For example, pupils in Year 5 learn how to round numbers. They then use this knowledge to estimate and check answers to complex calculations.

The teaching of early mathematics is weaker. Teachers in the early years do not consider what children already know before they teach new content. Children struggle to complete tasks because they are often too demanding.

Leaders ensure that pupils in key stage 2 gain important knowledge in science. For example, pupils learn about light and how it travels in straight lines. They use this knowledge to understand how periscopes work. However, teachers in key stage 1 do not have a strong understanding of what pupils need to know. They have not considered how this knowledge will help pupils' learning in future. Some pupils forget too quickly what has been taught.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength. Leaders have high ambitions for these pupils. Leaders and teachers ensure that the curriculum is adapted well to meet their needs. Skilled teaching assistants provide extra help for these pupils. Pupils with SEND work alongside their peers and gain the same knowledge as them in many subjects.

Pupils behave very well. There is very little low-level disruption in lessons. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and want to do well. Leaders ensure that pupils have many varied experiences. They work hard to make sure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils visit different places of worship, learn about saving money and debate current affairs, such as Brexit.

The headteacher and deputy headteachers have quickly become a cohesive and effective team. They have identified what needs to improve and are working hard to deal with weaknesses. Parents recognise leaders' dedication to the school and are complimentary about their work. Senior leaders have created a 'no excuses' culture. They want all pupils to receive a first-class education. They have taken effective action to improve the curriculum in some subjects. They recognise there is more work to do in other subjects.

Staff are proud to work at the school and value the support of leaders. Staff feel they have a manageable workload and are well cared for by leaders and the trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that the safety and welfare of pupils is paramount. The safeguarding team, known as the 'take care' team, are an asset to the school. They work tirelessly to keep pupils safe from harm. They have extensive knowledge of vulnerable pupils and their families. They act quickly to protect pupils. They make timely referrals for early help and are tenacious in seeking the right support for pupils.

Staff are well trained and vigilant. They know the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They know what to do and who to talk to when concerns arise. Pupils say they feel safe in school, and they all have an adult to whom they would tell their worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Many subject leaders are new to their roles. They need further support to be able to make a full and accurate evaluation of the quality of education in their area of responsibility. Starting with mathematics and science, senior leaders and trustees should provide further training and time for these leaders to fulfil their roles. Subject leaders should use this training and time to check that the curriculum is being taught effectively across all year groups so that pupils know and remember more.
- The implementation of the mathematics curriculum is effective in key stages 1 and 2. However, teachers do not plan well-sequenced activities in the early years. Leaders should ensure that teachers understand the order in which mathematical content is taught so children have the necessary knowledge to complete the work they are given. They should ensure that teachers receive the training necessary to improve their subject knowledge.
- The school's phonics programme is not well sequenced from Nursery through to the start of Year 1. Staff do not have a consistent approach to teaching children how to segment and blend in order to read words. Leaders should address this quickly so that more pupils gain the knowledge they need to achieve the expected standard of the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Some Year 2 and Year 3 pupils are not able to decode words accurately or quickly enough. The books that some pupils read are not well matched to the phonics they have been taught. Teachers must take more care in checking what pupils can read and understand. Teachers also need to make sure that reading books are well matched to what pupils are learning in their phonics sessions.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Whitemoor Primary and Nursery School, to be good in February 2011.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	138663
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10110140
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	433
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jane Gant
Headteacher	Laura Di Martino
Website	www.whitemooracademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 February 2016

Information about this school

- The school is a part of the SHINE Multi-Academy Trust.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2018.
- Two deputy headteachers were appointed to substantive roles in March 2019. Many subject leaders were new to post in September 2019.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with the headteacher, curriculum leaders and four members of the board of trustees, along with the chief executive officer.
- The inspector examined the quality of education that pupils receive in reading, mathematics and science. He visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' work, listened to pupils reading, visited additional support sessions run by teaching assistants and spoke with pupils and teachers about their lessons.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour, the school's plans for improvement and minutes from meetings of the board of trustees. The inspector considered information about pupils' achievement from published information and information on the school's website.

- The inspector took account of the 31 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. He took account of the 23 responses to the survey for staff. There were no responses to the pupils' survey.

Inspection team

Steve Varnam, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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