

Inspection of Whittington Green School

High Street, Old Whittington, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S41 9LG

Inspection dates: 15–16 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff know each other well in this small secondary school. Pupils are polite and caring and get along well together. They talk to visitors and make them feel very welcome. Pupils behave well. Inspectors saw pupils and staff working together in a positive and respectful manner. Older pupils told us that the school has improved in the last few years.

Leaders want pupils to achieve well. Pupils are keen to take part in and enjoy the activities that leaders and teachers provide. They are now achieving well in some subjects. However, in other subjects, such as English, pupils do not learn important knowledge and remember it well enough.

Leaders care a great deal about pupils' well-being. They provide pupils with a wide range of learning experiences. Examples include battlefield trips, public speaking and the annual activity week. During the inspection, pupils were learning how to start a heart. There are plenty of clubs for pupils to get involved with. These range from themes such as gardening to climate change and photography. When bullying does occur, pupils are clear that staff deal with it well. Pupils also told us they feel safe in school.

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

Leaders have improved some areas of the school's curriculum. Pupils are achieving better than they have done in the past. Although improving, the quality of education is not yet good in all subjects. Some subject plans are new, or not developed well. Suggested approaches to teaching are not precise enough. Pupils do not deepen their knowledge or master the skills they need. They do not achieve as well as they should. This is especially true in English. The focus on reading is not as sharp as it should be to improve pupils' reading skills. Some pupils are not fluent readers. Leaders have introduced new approaches to broaden pupils' vocabulary.

In other subjects, especially in mathematics and science, pupils achieve well. Subject leaders provide detailed plans explaining what to teach and when to teach it. Teachers use strong subject knowledge to help pupils build up knowledge over time. Pupils told us that teachers' clear explanations in mathematics help them understand their learning. Teachers check what pupils can remember. In science, pupils recall information well from topics studied in the past. Pupils make effective use of this remembered information in new learning.

Pupils begin their GCSEs in Year 9. Leaders have reduced the teaching of religious education in key stage 4. Some subject content is not taught and pupils have gaps in their knowledge.

Leaders do not check that staff follow the agreed approaches well enough. They provide staff with training to help them deliver their subjects. They do not, however,

make sure that the training gives teachers the knowledge they need.

The curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and behaviour. Leaders have improved pupils' behaviour and their attendance. Pupils understand right and wrong. They grow in self-confidence and develop strength of character. They learn about substance abuse, financial management and making different choices. This helps prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils told us that it is 'fine to be different'. Leaders also provide pupils with comprehensive careers advice and guidance.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is not good enough. Pupils' personal development is promoted well. However, their academic needs are not met well. Leaders do not identify pupils' learning needs accurately. Pupils' support plans do not contain the detail required to meet their needs. Staff do not make sure that activities help pupils learn well enough.

The implementation of leaders' plans is not checked thoroughly. Governors are, therefore, not able to measure improvement as accurately as they should. Leaders have worked hard to build positive relationships with parents. Staff enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff know pupils, their families and the local community well. Leaders check on the suitability of staff to work with pupils. Staff attend regular safeguarding training. They know how to raise any concerns they may have about a pupil. Pupils learn about risks they may face and how to keep themselves safe. The comprehensive personal, social and health education programme contributes well to this. Leaders check on vulnerable pupils through the pastoral system. They respond well to any concerns reported. They make sure that pupils get the extra support they may need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils in Year 9 do not cover effectively some subject content. New content is either not provided or taught too superficially. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge in some subjects. Some pupils in key stage 4 have limited time to study religious education. Leaders need to rectify any narrowing of or omissions in the curriculum.
- The effectiveness of subject leaders' planning, sequencing and implementation of the curriculum is not good enough in some subjects, particularly in English. Senior leaders should support subject leaders to construct their curriculum plans. These plans should be consistently well delivered. Some pupils do not have well-embedded reading skills. This results in them having a lack of confidence in, and not enjoying, their reading. Leaders need to ensure that reading sits at the heart

of the curriculum.

- Teachers' expertise is not consistent. Some teachers do not follow the curriculum plans as well as they should. Leaders do not check, as thoroughly as they should, how well teachers deliver the plans. This results in an inconsistent approach to improving the quality of education. Leaders need to check more carefully that their plans are being followed. They also need to ensure that teachers have the precise subject knowledge and skills to deliver the plans well.
- Pupils with SEND are not securely provided with the academic support they need. Their support plans do not help teachers modify their lesson planning carefully enough. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is ambitious for pupils with SEND. They should ensure that teachers consider pupils' needs when planning activities and provide pupils with the support they need to achieve well.

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're 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	112958
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10110037
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	377
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Bryan Midgley
Headteacher	Tracey Burnside
Website	www.wgs.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 May 2017

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and other staff. Inspectors met with four members of the governing body and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors looked in detail at four subjects: English, mathematics, science and history, to consider the quality of education. They also looked more broadly at a range of other subjects. Inspectors visited 22 lessons, many with leaders. They met with teachers, subject leaders and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also heard some pupils read and observed pupils' breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at a range of other documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors also looked at leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and plans for improvement. Inspectors

reviewed and considered the information on the school's website.

- Inspectors took account of the 42 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 25 free-text responses. They also considered the school's own parental survey. Inspectors reviewed the 22 responses to the staff survey and the 50 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Vondra Mays, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lynn Cox	Ofsted Inspector
Dick Vasey	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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