

Inspection of a good school: Richard Whittington Primary School

Thornbera Gardens, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM23 3NP

Inspection dates:

26–27 November 2019

Outcome

Richard Whittington Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Richard Whittington Primary School. They are happy, safe and well cared for. Pupils, parents and carers confirm this. Pupils get on well with their classmates, their teachers and other staff. Pupils speak confidently about how adults help them. Pupils say that bullying and acts of unkindness are rare. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are integrated well into lessons and enjoy all aspects of school life.

Pupils respond well to their teachers' high expectations of learning and behaviour. They are keen to learn because teachers plan interesting and exciting learning activities for them. Pupils model the school's values, including 'wanting to do the best you can in everything you do'. They share their ideas with, and listen respectfully to, other pupils. Pupils talk confidently and articulately to adults.

Pupils appreciate the range of clubs and after-school activities that are available to them. Pupils enjoy reading and being read to. They say that there is a much better selection of books available to them this year compared with last year. Breaks and lunchtimes are harmonious affairs. Pupils benefit from a range of playground equipment that helps to keep them fit.

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

Leaders and staff ensure that learning challenges and enthuses pupils. Subject leaders have thought carefully about the order in which pupils should learn new information, especially in English and mathematics. Leaders ensure that new learning builds on previous learning step by step. Pupils remember and understand their learning. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They have many rich learning experiences.

Leaders place a high priority on developing pupils' reading skills. Pupils read well at Richard Whittington Primary School. Leaders ensure that their chosen phonics programme is organised well and taught effectively. Most pupils reach the expected standard in the

Year 1 phonics screening check. Staff help weaker readers to catch up quickly. There is a new approach to the teaching of reading in key stage 2. This is helping pupils to become better readers. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the books that they are reading in class. They particularly enjoy the books their teachers read to them. They say they 'can't wait for the next section'. The school uses an online system that provides pupils with challenges to complete before they move on to their next book. Pupils enjoy these challenges and feel encouraged to read more books. The school has a good stock of reading books that pupils can read within their capabilities.

Leaders and teachers know what should be taught in each year and the best order in which to teach new ideas. They have designed the curriculum in mathematics to help pupils develop their understanding of key mathematical concepts. Teachers make good use of the right resources in lessons. Pupils have opportunities to use resources well to help them practise and understand the importance of number, for example.

Curriculum leaders have a good knowledge of their subjects. They have recently changed and improved some of the history curriculum. Pupils say that they have started to study interesting topics. They are increasingly learning the most important knowledge and skills in each topic and in a suitable order. Pupils present their work well and can remember what they have learned over this term. However, some older pupils' spelling of key vocabulary is inaccurate. This is not corrected as well as it could be by staff, and pupils are not developing their skills as well as they could.

Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly. Teachers use the information they have to plan the most appropriate next steps so that pupils learn more. Leaders and staff are quick to put plans in place to support any pupils who are falling behind. Pupils with SEND are integrated into lessons and well supported.

Leaders know what the school does well and what it needs to do better. They know that there is further work to be done in mathematics and English. This is because some new approaches need more time to bring about improvement.

Children make a good start to their learning in the Reception and Nursery classes. They are provided with exciting learning experiences in both the inside and outside learning spaces. There is a well-structured approach to reading. Children learn letters and the sounds these make in a fun and enjoyable way. They count regularly and are developing their understanding of number. Children enjoy their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff ensure that pupils' safety is given the highest priority. Adults know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Leaders and governors ensure that all aspects of safeguarding comply with current guidance. Staff receive regular training about possible signs of abuse and neglect. They know what to do if they have a concern about a child. Staff log concerns appropriately and leaders take prompt and necessary action.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a number of subjects, such as personal, social and health education lessons, computing lessons and also in assemblies. Parents receive regular information to help them keep up to date about e-safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have recently changed their approach to teaching in subjects such as history. Planning shows that leaders have considered an appropriate sequence of knowledge and skills that pupils should learn from Reception to Year 6. However, the implementation of leaders' plans is in the early stages. Leaders need to ensure that pupils learn, remember and do more in all subjects across the curriculum.
- In subjects other than English, staff do not consistently promote the spelling of words as well as they should. Pupils spell important subject-specific words incorrectly and these mistakes are not rectified. Leaders need to ensure that adults have the same expectations in all subjects so that pupils deepen their understanding and accuracy.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2016.

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	117346
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10110317
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	301
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rob Halkyard
Headteacher	Craig Wood
Website	www.whittington.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 March 2016

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with SEND.
- The current headteacher joined the school in April 2019. There have been significant changes in teaching staff and leadership responsibilities since the previous inspection in 2016.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team and the special educational needs coordinator. I held a meeting with members of the governing body. I also had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- I looked at curriculum plans, school development plans and pupils' attendance and behaviour records.
- The subjects I considered in depth as part of this inspection were reading,

mathematics and history. In each subject, I visited lessons in different year groups, scrutinised pupils' work and held discussions with subject leaders, pupils and teachers.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, I met with the school's designated safeguarding lead, checked the school's single central record, looked at child protection records and spoke with pupils, staff and governors.
- I looked at 50 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 45 free-text responses. I also considered 26 responses to the staff online questionnaire and 37 responses from pupils to their questionnaire.

Inspection team

Joan Beale, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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