

# Inspection of Whaley Thorns Primary School

Portland Road, Langwith, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG20 9HB

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Inspection dates: 3–4 December 2019

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

While Whaley Thorns does not yet give pupils the good education they need, it is improving quickly.

Pupils say that the school is getting better, and parents agree. Pupils told us about their interesting lessons, and how they learn about the Second World War. They find out how to round numbers to 1000. In science, they drop eggs in vinegar and describe how they become 'soft and translucent'. They plant trees in the school grounds.

A new approach to teaching early reading is working well. Children are learning to sound out words confidently. Nevertheless, many other subjects are not taught effectively enough. Staff have not yet planned lessons in sequences that build up pupils' knowledge over time. Pupils do not know enough about the things they should for their age.

Absence remains too high. However, behaviour in school has improved considerably. Teachers are able to teach without being disrupted and everyone can learn. Staff help the few pupils who cannot manage their own conduct. Bullying is now rare, and staff deal with it well. Murphy, the school dog, helps all pupils to feel calm. Pupils feel safe in school.

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

The headteacher is improving all aspects of this school. She is determined that the education pupils receive will be a good one for every pupil. A number of staffing changes have hindered the pace of improvement. She has now secured a stable team that is united and eager to move forward. She takes bold decisions and has earned the respect of staff. Training is helping them to improve their practice.

Staff are now giving the many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) much better support. Those with social, emotional and mental health needs are particularly well provided for. These pupils told us how the help that they get has improved their confidence and happiness. The school is proud to welcome in all pupils, regardless of their needs, abilities or backgrounds. Staff are caring and kind.

The head of the early years has recently adjusted the curriculum so that children can apply the knowledge that they are taught. This is because too few children in the past were well-prepared to enter Year 1. While changes are too recent to show full impact, there are promising early signs. Children are writing letters to Santa, using their skills. Having learned some numbers, children are using coins. Staff model language to children so that they learn to speak clearly. They teach them new words, such as 'windows' and 'rockets'.

Teachers have made changes to their phonics teaching. This was because children

were not learning to read quickly enough. All staff now teach children daily in the same way, using 'robot arms' to 'chop up words' into the different sounds. Pupils are becoming more fluent readers. Staff are also showing them how to enjoy reading books. Pupils listen with smiles as they hear stories such as 'The Stinky Sprouts'. The reading ambassadors have hidden books around the village for other pupils to find. This is helping pupils to develop a love of reading.

Over time, too many lessons have been poorly planned and delivered. Pupils have gaps in the knowledge they need to succeed. Not enough achieve well. Leaders are working to address this. However, many foundation subjects are not yet well constructed. They do not build up pupils' knowledge over time. Leaders have not decided precisely what they want pupils to remember at the end of each academic year. However, this is not true of all foundation subjects. In physical education (PE), for example, pupils become skilled sports players. They are good gymnasts with balance and poise.

Pupils' attendance is not high enough. This hampers their progress because they are missing important lessons. This aside, pupils' behaviour has improved greatly. Learning is happening in orderly classrooms. Pupils are paying attention in class and doing as staff ask them. Staff address the small amount of bullying that occurs, in a quick and fair way.

Pupils' personal development is good. They learn about different cultures. Staff give them many responsibilities around school. The school council are helping everyone to reduce plastic use. Children in the Reception Year visit a home for the elderly. They help residents to do aerobics and bowling. Pupils of all ages learn philosophy. They discuss questions such as 'What time should children go to bed, and why?' Staff teach pupils to be resilient and independent from the time they start school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are doing all they can to keep pupils safe. They are ensuring that staff are trained in safeguarding. They make sure that staff understand their responsibilities to let them know of any concern that a pupil might be being harmed. Leaders keep meticulous records and so have a detailed knowledge of vulnerable pupils. These show that leaders work with a wide range of external agencies to help pupils at risk of harm.

Leaders give parents good information to help protect their child from risks when using the internet or a mobile phone.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Most foundation subjects are not yet planned in a sufficiently coherent and

sequenced way. Some subject leaders are new to their role. They have not yet made secure decisions about what knowledge and skills they want pupils in different year groups to learn. As a result, pupils do not develop sufficient knowledge over time. Senior leaders should ensure that subject leaders are given support to construct an ambitious curriculum across all subjects that results in pupils achieving well.

- Due to an insufficiently coherent curriculum being taught over time, many pupils have gaps in their knowledge. This has meant that not enough of them are able to work at the level typically found for their year group. Leaders should ensure that the new curriculum is implemented effectively so that pupils learn the knowledge and skills that they need.
- Pupils' absence is too high. This is hindering their ability to know and remember the things they need to, or to catch up, because they are missing too many lessons. Leaders should ensure that they improve pupils' attendance so that it is at least broadly in line with the national average.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112793
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10121195
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	123
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Ross Wormall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Annette Lupton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.whaleythornsschool.co.uk">www.whaleythornsschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 November 2018

## Information about this school

- The school plans to become part of the T.E.A.M. Education Trust during the spring term of 2020.

## Information about this inspection

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

- In order to judge the quality of education, we focused the inspection on specific subjects of the curriculum. We did deep dives in reading, mathematics, science, and physical education (PE). This involved meeting with senior and subject leaders, scrutinising curriculum planning, and visiting lessons where pupils were learning these subjects. We met pupils from the lessons and looked at their work in these and in other subjects. We met with teachers about the curriculum they were delivering.
- In addition, we met with representatives of the governing body and the coordinator for pupils with SEND. We spoke with a representative of the local authority. We read a wide variety of school documents, including the school development plan. We also spoke other members of staff, including mid-day supervisors. We checked whether pupils were safe and happy at the school's

after-school club.

- We took note of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, met with parents at the start of the school day, and met with staff to hear their views about the school and its leadership.
- In order to judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, we read the school's relevant policies, scrutinised the single central record, checked the school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and interviewed the designated lead for safeguarding. We also spoke with staff to check details of their safeguarding knowledge and training, that they understood the importance of their responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns without delay, and if they knew the procedure for doing this. We checked samples of safeguarding records, spoke with parents about their child's safety at the school, and read responses from Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Roary Pownall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Dorothy Stenson

Ofsted Inspector

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