

# Inspection of Whitehill Primary School

Sun Lane, Gravesend, Kent DA12 5HN

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Inspection dates: 23 and 24 March 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

Pupils enjoy their time at school. They are proud to belong, polite and helpful. Children settle into the early years quickly and thrive.

Staff care deeply about pupils. One said, 'It is all about the children.' Pupils say they feel safe and that staff help them to sort out their concerns, including about bullying.

During lessons, inspectors noted that the school was calm, and pupils behaved well. However, at social times, a number of key stage 2 pupils are boisterous. A small minority of the school community has concerns about pupils' behaviour.

The curriculum is not broad enough or ambitious enough about what pupils will learn. It is not planned sufficiently well to enable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to acquire the knowledge they need for their next steps in education. This academic year, the curriculum has been narrowed for some pupils and they have not learned subjects such as music and modern foreign languages.

Turbulence in leadership in recent times has meant that many planned developments did not take place. The recently appointed headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas to improve. She has already begun to secure improvements.

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

Leaders have not established a sufficiently coherent and ambitious curriculum. The recently appointed headteacher recognises that the curriculum lacks scope and ambition.

In mathematics and English, teachers are clear about what pupils are expected to learn and remember. The curriculum in these subjects is designed to build pupils' learning sequentially towards identified endpoints. Teaching staff deliver the mathematics and English curriculum competently and assess pupils' progress regularly. Most pupils do well in reading and mathematics.

The wider curriculum is less well developed than in English and mathematics. Leaders have not provided advice on how to use teaching materials to support pupils' learning in the wider subjects, including science, arts and humanities. Consequently, teaching does not build on pupils' previous knowledge and skills well enough. Teaching staff are not yet finding out exactly what pupils have previously learned to identify and close any gaps in knowledge. Consequently, the current wider curriculum does not prepare pupils sufficiently well for their next stage of education.

Pupils with SEND are not being supported well enough, especially in key stage 2. Staff have not identified or provided the exact support pupils need to make successful next steps in learning. However, leaders have made SEND provision a priority for improvement. Teachers have had recent training to help them adapt their teaching to support pupils with SEND. It is too early to see the impact of this work.

The early years foundation stage is a strength of the school. It is a nurturing and welcoming environment. The curriculum is ambitious and stimulating. Skilful teaching staff provide a positive learning experience for children. Children grow in their independence and skills. They have a joyful experience in the early years and learn well.

The early reading curriculum is planned well. Effective staff training in the teaching of phonics ensures consistency across Reception Year and key stage 1. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise their skills by reading books that match the sounds they know. Most pupils at key stage 2 enjoy reading and visit the well-stocked library regularly. Weaker readers in key stage 2 are less enthusiastic about reading. This is because staff are not as adept at supporting pupils in key stage 2 who fall behind in reading.

The recently appointed headteacher has worked with the school community to raise expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct. This work has already had an impact on improving pupils' behaviour, especially during lesson times. Leaders still have work to do to ensure that all staff are supported in managing pupils' behaviour consistently, including during social times.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. The school provides a range of clubs and extra-curricular activities. Regular assemblies help pupils to understand right and wrong and to reflect on the consequences of their actions. Leaders are currently improving the personal, social and health education curriculum with more emphasis given to teaching pupils about fundamental British values and the promotion of equality issues.

Until recently, weaknesses in governance and leadership meant that statutory requirements have not been met consistently. For example, leaders have not consulted with parents about the school's relationships and sex education policy. However, governance has strengthened considerably in recent months. The trust and local governing body members are determined to provide helpful challenge and support to school leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Regular training ensures that staff know how to identify signs that pupils are at risk. The designated safeguarding leads have good links with agencies, such as children's services. They make sure that pupils that are a cause for concern are supported well. Leaders keep detailed records of safeguarding issues and any actions taken.

Leaders make sure that all required safeguarding checks are completed when recruiting staff. Some of the suitability of management checks on the governing body were not in place fully. This was rectified easily during the inspection.

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

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

- The current curriculum is not planned and sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before. The endpoints that the curriculum is building toward are not clear. Pupils need to know more and remember more of the intended curriculum. Leaders have started to revisit the vision for the curriculum, although it is in its infancy. Leaders should ensure that there are clear curriculum plans to support teaching.
- Teaching does not identify or meet the needs of pupils with SEND well enough. Staff have not received sufficient training to enable them to support pupils' learning effectively. Leaders should make sure that pupils' additional needs are identified accurately. They should ensure that actions required to help pupils with SEND are shared with teaching staff and parents. In this way, pupils with SEND will be helped more effectively and communication with parents will improve.
- Not all pupils' behaviour at social times is yet as it should be. Consequently, some of the school community report that pupils' behaviour is a concern. Leaders are currently relaunching the behaviour policy. Leaders should make sure that all staff are supported to manage behaviour consistently so that the behaviour of pupils continues to improve. This is so that all the school community have every confidence that pupils' misbehaviour is tackled well.
- The trust and the local governing body have not yet developed a reliable system to find out whether all statutory requirements are met or how well the wider curriculum is covered. Governors should establish a robust and reliable system for holding leaders to account for the school's work. This should include the use of a clear improvement plan showing the intended outcomes of leaders' actions. This is so that governors are kept well informed and can challenge and support leaders appropriately.

## **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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 the school and 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140800
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211224
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	698
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Graham Stedman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Carpenter
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.whitehillprimary.com">www.whitehillprimary.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Two interim headteachers have been in post between October 2021 and February 2022. The substantive headteacher had been in post for four weeks at the time of the inspection.
- A new chair of the local governing body was appointed in November 2021.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- This was the first section 5 inspection since the school converted to an academy in 2014.

## Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector spoke with the chair of trustees, the chief executive officer and the chair of the local governing body.
- To investigate the quality of education, inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum plans in other subjects and spoke to leaders about the wider curriculum.
- The inspectors viewed the website and looked at a number of policies and documents.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff, parents and pupils expressed in Ofsted's online surveys. They also met parents at the school gate.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector checked the single central record of recruitment checks and other safeguarding records. Inspectors also talked to leaders in charge of safeguarding, a range of staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Sue Child, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Allen	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Shields	Ofsted Inspector
Tracy Good	Ofsted Inspector

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