

Inspection of a good school: Whinstone Primary School

Lowfields Avenue, Ingleby Barwick, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 0RJ

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 April 2022

Outcome

Whinstone Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Ready, respectful and safe. Whinstone's rules are known and followed by all adults and pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. These are applied with consistency in classrooms and at playtimes. As a result, behaviour throughout the school day is respectful and calm. All pupils say that teachers make them feel safe and happy.

Pupils told the inspector that bullying happens very rarely. When it does happen, pupils say they can speak to any adult and it will be fixed quickly. The Whinstone worry box, accessed through the school website, allows pupils to easily report their worries. Pupils work as anti-bullying ambassadors and take their role seriously. They have received the training they need to deal with minor playground issues. They wear their yellow hoodies with pride.

Leaders have ensured that fundamental British values form an integral part of the positive culture in this school. Pupils have a clear understanding of what it means to be respectful and tolerant. All staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils demonstrate the school motto, 'Helping each other to be the best we can be'. They have positive attitudes to their work, their school and each other. Pupils told the inspector, 'There is no limit to what we can achieve.'

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

Supported by the trust, leaders have focused on developing the curriculum. The local governing committee holds termly meetings with subject leaders. The committee is kept well informed about curriculum improvements.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Staff have received the training they need to teach leaders' chosen phonics programme with consistency. Leaders use phonics assessments to match the books pupils read with the sounds that they already know. This gives pupils plenty of practice and supports them to become fluent readers. When pupils fall behind with their reading, leaders ensure that they get the help they need to catch up. This

includes computer-based support and regular reading with an adult. Leaders have recently introduced class texts across the school. These books have been carefully chosen. They cover themes like racial and cultural diversity to support pupils' understanding of difference and fundamental British values.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes begin phonics and mathematics sessions as soon as they start in school. Leaders provide plenty of opportunities for children to practise their newly learned sounds as they play. Adults are skilful in challenging children's thinking with the questions they ask. Activities are designed to promote children's language development. The inspector saw children sharing their ideas as they created a shop out of cardboard boxes. Adults read books with children and encourage them to talk about the stories they have heard.

The mathematics curriculum is going through a process of change. Leaders are increasing the number of times that pupils revisit key mathematical concepts. Current plans are suitably ambitious. They set out what pupils will learn from Nursery to Year 6. Mathematical concepts, such as algebra, are introduced at an appropriate point. Teachers use assessments well to identify and fill the gaps in pupils' knowledge. They regularly revisit previous learning in lessons. As a result, pupils have a secure understanding of what they have been taught.

In subjects, such as history, leaders have carefully sequenced the curriculum for pupils in key stage 2. This ensures that new learning builds on what pupils already know. This work is not complete for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2. During conversations with the inspector, older pupils explained the spread of the Roman empire and life during Elizabethan times using vocabulary such as invasion, trade and monarchy. However, the subject knowledge and concepts that leaders want pupils to understand are often too broad. As a result, pupils' understanding is not secure enough. Leaders have introduced ways for pupils to provide written feedback to teachers on what they have remembered. This helps teachers to change their plans and revisit previous learning, when it is needed. However, assessments in wider curriculum subjects like history and personal, social and health education (PSHE) are not sharp enough. They do not provide teachers with enough detail of what pupils know and can do.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) makes regular checks on the curriculum these pupils receive to ensure it meets their needs. Leaders also provide staff with the advice and support they need to make adaptations to the curriculum. When barriers to pupils' learning are identified, leaders work closely with outside agencies and school staff to put extra support in place.

The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum has taught pupils about healthy relationships and the diverse nature of families in modern Britain. Older pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of equality and diversity issues. Recent discussions about Ukraine have taught pupils the value of living in a free and democratic society.

Leaders give roles of responsibility to pupils. Sports crew, digital leaders and school councillors all contribute to the life of the school and the local area. Pupils spoke with pride about the money they had raised towards a defibrillator in the local community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that the necessary checks are made on staff to ensure they are safe to work with pupils. All staff have the knowledge that they need to keep pupils safe. Staff with safeguarding responsibilities have the time they need to carry out their roles.

Leaders provide regular updates through half-termly safeguarding newsletters. This ensures that safeguarding continues to have a high profile in school. Concerns about pupils are well documented and acted on in a timely manner. The wider curriculum gives pupils the knowledge they need to stay safe online. All pupils know to report their concerns to a trusted adult.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, such as history, the curriculum is not sequenced clearly for all pupils. For younger pupils, the curriculum does not build with enough accuracy on what pupils already know. The key historical concepts that leaders want pupils to learn are often too broad and complex. This means that pupils do not achieve the depth of understanding required. Leaders should review their curriculum sequencing to ensure that the order and breadth of curriculum content is well ordered and manageable. This will allow pupils to develop a deeper subject knowledge each year. Leaders have already taken action to begin addressing this. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Leaders' approach to assessing pupils learning in the wider curriculum is not precise enough. It does not identify what pupils know and can do in subjects such as PSHE and history. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always known. Leaders should ensure that they develop their assessment systems across the curriculum so that pupils' knowledge and skills are accurately checked.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Whinstone Primary School, to be good in November 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 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

Unique reference number	145223
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10227623
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	507
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Charlotte Irving
Headteacher	Mike Poppitt
Website	www.whinstone.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Whinstone Primary School joined the Vision Academy Learning Trust in December 2017.
- At the time of the inspection, an acting deputy headteacher was in place.
- The school is much larger than average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well below national averages.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This is the first routine inspection that the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. Meetings were held with the SENCo and early years leader.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. The inspector met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils'

work and talked to pupils and teachers. The inspector also reviewed leaders' PSHE plans.

- The inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult and visited reading and phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1. The inspector also heard pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 read.
- The inspector spoke with a selection of parents at the end of the school day.
- The inspector met with the CEO of the Vision Academy Learning Trust.
- The inspector held conversations with three members of the local governing committee, including the chair.
- The inspector reviewed the responses that were received through Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire as well as the free-text responses. The inspector reviewed the responses received through the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour throughout the school day, including during lesson visits and at lunchtime.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's safeguarding documentation and discussed behaviour with the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher.

Inspection team

Chris Pearce, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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