

Inspection of Whittington Moor Nursery and Infant Academy

Scarsdale Road, Whittington Moor, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S41 8NF

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this school. This is reflected in their positive attendance rates. One pupil told an inspector, 'This is the best school ever. We like spending time with our friends. All the teachers are nice.' Pupils are proud of the roles they play in the life of the school, including play leaders and 'ivengers' computing leaders. They make a positive contribution through the school council. The school council has helped to plan a new outdoor space and has brought about improvements in recycling.

Relationships between pupils and adults are positive. Pupils are well cared for and nurtured. Staff expect pupils to work hard and to follow the school's rules. They do. Behaviour is good in classes and around school. Pupils understand how characters such as the careful caterpillar, the kind kingfisher and the working woodpecker help them to behave and work hard. Pupils enjoy earning the wide variety of awards that are on offer, including dojos, stickers, house points and badges. The weekly hot chocolate event with the headteacher is prized highly.

The school's '20 things to do before eight' ensure that pupils experience a wide variety of activities. These include working on an allotment, going to the theatre, visiting the seaside and building a den.

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

A new phonics programme has been recently introduced. It is working well. The programme sets out the sounds that pupils should know at each point of their education. It is taught consistently well. The books that pupils read are closely matched to the sounds they have learned. This helps pupils become fluent readers.

Over time, pupils develop a passion for reading. They have access to a wide range of texts and genres. Pupils are proud of their school library, including the new electronic system for scanning books in and out.

The school's curriculum is well planned and sequenced. It sets out what pupils should learn, term by term, in each subject. Leaders have thought carefully about the order in which subject content is taught. However, in some subjects, the curriculum does not identify precisely enough the most important information that pupils need to know and remember. This means that leaders cannot check closely enough on how well pupils build their knowledge over time.

Teachers plan activities that are engaging. Pupils work hard. However, there are some minor inconsistencies in how effectively teachers deliver the curriculum. In a small number of cases, teachers expect pupils to achieve too much, too quickly. They do not plan learning that helps pupils build on what they know and can do already. Some pupils do not fully master essential knowledge and skills before teachers move on.

Children get off to a good start in the early years. Staff are skilled at helping children develop their communication and language skills. The environment is well organised. It enables children to explore and learn the curriculum. The curriculum makes clear what children should know and be able to do, from the start of Nursery to the end of the Reception Year. It prepares children well for key stage 1 and beyond. However, leaders have not thought about the curriculum in as much detail for children who join the setting from the age of two years. While these children are well cared for, leaders have not identified the specific milestones that they expect these children to reach before nursery age.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. Staff have a fully rounded understanding of these pupils' needs. The support adults provide to these pupils is well tailored. As a result, pupils with SEND get the help they need. Leaders are ambitious for pupils with SEND. They make regular checks to ensure that the support in place for these pupils is working well.

Leaders prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced. Pupils learn about people from different backgrounds. They know it is important to treat everyone equally.

Leaders have created a caring and ambitious staff team. Staff are proud to work at the school. Leaders' vision, to create an environment where pupils are nurtured so that they can thrive and blossom, is shared by all.

The trust provides effective support. A recent review has made the roles and responsibilities of those responsible for governance clearer. Trustees and members of the academy improvement board provide effective challenge and support for school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Regular staff training and updates ensure that keeping children safe is the school's highest priority. Staff know pupils well and are alert to any possible indicators of abuse. All concerns are recorded. Pupils' safeguarding records are detailed.

Safeguarding leaders provide a wide range of valuable help and support to pupils and their families. Pupils who need help to deal with their feelings and emotions benefit from working with staff in the school's nurture room. Pupils know that they can use the 'worry boxes' to tell staff if they have a concern.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is well planned and sequenced, across the full range of

subjects. However, in some subjects, the curriculum does not set out precisely enough the most important information that pupils should know and remember. This means that leaders cannot check closely enough on how well pupils systematically build their knowledge over time. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum makes clear the most important content pupils are expected to know and remember, at each stage of their education, across all subjects.

- There are some minor inconsistencies in how well teachers deliver the curriculum. In a small number of cases, teachers do not plan activities that help pupils build effectively on what they already know and can do. This means that some pupils do not master important knowledge and skills as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently plan learning that helps pupils to build incrementally on what they know and can do over time.
- The curriculum is well planned and sequenced for children in the Nursery and Reception Years. However, the curriculum has not been thought about as thoroughly for children who join the setting from the age of two years. It does not set out the specific milestones that children are expected to reach before nursery age. Leaders should ensure that the early years curriculum identifies precisely what children should know and be able to do as soon as they begin to attend the setting.

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	145520
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10227027
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	83
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Karen Robinson
Headteacher	Lauren Kay (Head of Academy)
Website	www.whittingtonmoor.academy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This was the first inspection since the school opened as an academy in March 2018.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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 held meetings with the head of school, the trust's executive primary lead, curriculum leaders, the early years leader and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: reading, mathematics, history and music. To do this, they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at

pupils' work, listened to pupils read and met with teachers and pupils. Inspectors also looked at curriculum information for science, geography and PSHE.

- The lead inspector met the chair and vice-chair of trustees. He met with the chief executive officer of The Cavendish Learning Trust. He also held a telephone discussion with the chair of the academy improvement board.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. An inspector spoke informally to parents outside the school.
- Inspectors met with safeguarding leaders. They reviewed school documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- An inspector visited the breakfast club and an assembly, observed lunchtime in the dining hall and spoke informally with pupils on the playground.

Inspection team

Vic Wilkinson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ellenor Beighton

Ofsted Inspector

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