

# Inspection of a good school: Whitley Lodge First School

Woodburn Drive, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear NE26 3HW

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Inspection dates:

14 and 15 June 2022

## Outcome

Whitley Lodge First School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say they feel safe and happy. Pupils are kind and helpful at Whitley Lodge. Pupils would recommend the school to others. As one pupil commented, 'It doesn't matter where you come from or what beliefs you have, you'll be welcome here.'

Staff and pupils have positive relationships. This creates a harmonious atmosphere. Pupils know there is always an adult to talk to if they have a worry, concern or want to share good news.

Pupil behaviour is exemplary. In classrooms, pupils learn without disruption. Pupils are respectful of each other and listen attentively to adults. Pupils move around school sensibly. They enjoy outdoor breaktimes and make the most of the outdoor equipment that is available.

Pupils have learned about bullying. They know there can be different kinds of bullying. They say it does not happen at school but are confident that if it did, adults would intervene quickly to help.

Staff have high expectations for pupils. They expect pupils to try their best. This includes working hard but also being the best person you can be. One of the school values, which is 'to promote positive values and to make sure there are equal opportunities for all children', resonates around the school. The school is inclusive, welcoming and part of the community.

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

School leaders, including governors, have successfully managed a period of change during the last twelve months. Many leaders, including the two headteachers, have been in acting leadership posts this year. With support from the local authority, the school has continued to improve. Decisions about the curriculum, a change of phonics programme, the impact of COVID-19, plus extensive building issues have all been managed effectively.

School leaders and governors have created an environment where staff feel valued and listened to. Consequently, staff are empowered to suggest ideas and do what is best for the pupils they teach. For example, teachers in early years have rewritten the curriculum and designed aspirational targets for children at the end of Nursery. The children are thriving.

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that is relevant for the pupils at Whitley Lodge. For example, the history curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to learn about their locality. The pupils have lots of opportunities to visit local places and develop a historical understanding of where they live.

Leaders have recently introduced a new reading scheme. Staff have been well trained, and pupils are benefiting from the rigorous daily phonics curriculum they receive. Pupils who are just learning to read can identify sounds accurately and apply this knowledge consistently. Reading books are carefully matched to pupils' knowledge so they can practise the sounds they are learning. Pupils across the school have access to a wide range of high-quality texts. The reading curriculum includes seven prominent authors, and all children listen to or read a selection of books from these authors. Pupils are developing a love for reading.

Leaders consider a range of information before making curriculum decisions. They think about pupils' starting points, what content the middle school will cover and what will have the biggest impact. Pupils say they 'love' mathematics as it's exciting and 'good fun'. The mathematics curriculum includes lots of practical opportunities. Pupils are encouraged to talk about mathematics. The school's 'see, notice, wonder' strategy really supports children to identify patterns in shape and number. Children are very confident to explain their thinking and solve problems.

The curriculum is well sequenced and contains appropriate knowledge content. However, at times, the activity that pupils do becomes more important than what they are learning. Consequently, pupils struggle to talk in detail about what they have studied and show how they can apply the knowledge they have acquired.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high-quality support and provision. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has built excellent relationships with external agencies, parents, staff and pupils. Many pupils need significant adaptations to help them access the curriculum. Staff are well trained and understand that strong pastoral knowledge of the pupils as well as curriculum knowledge are vital. Pupils who access the Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) receive a bespoke curriculum. This enables these pupils to access tailored subject support in small groups and develop wider social skills through integration into mainstream classes in the afternoon. The pupils benefit enormously from this model and achieve well.

Part of the school's vision is to develop pupils' resilience, independence and emotional well-being. Leaders are determined that the curriculum and relevant training for staff will support this. The 'Beach School' curriculum develops pupils' understanding of the environment, wildlife and staying safe next to water. Staff have received yoga and

mindfulness training. Pupils benefit from the range of opportunities and experiences they are given.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Designated safeguarding leads make sure that all staff are appropriately trained and aware of current safeguarding policy. Although the school has very few safeguarding incidents, there is no complacency from staff. Where consultation or involvement with external agencies is required, it happens quickly and is well recorded.

Leaders acknowledge that recent times have placed increased pressures on many families. They understand that poor mental health can negatively affect pupils. To support pupils, staff and families, leaders are working in partnership with North Tyneside local authority on a mental health project to support the community.

The personal, social and health education curriculum teaches pupils how to stay safe online, manage risks and regulate their own behaviours.

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

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

- At times, in some subjects, the activity that pupils do becomes more important than what they are learning. Consequently, a few pupils struggle to talk in detail about what they have studied and show how they can apply the knowledge they have acquired. Leaders should ensure that the implementation of the curriculum matches the intent and check carefully that pupils understand what they are studying.

## **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 school to be good in May 2017.

## 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>	108600
<b>Local authority</b>	North Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	10228071
<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	273
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Abigail Cumming
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mandy Elkin and Emma Lucas
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.whitleylodgeschool.org.uk">www.whitleylodgeschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Both headteachers have been in temporary 'acting' positions this academic year.
- A new headteacher has been appointed for September 2022.
- The school has an additional resource provision for five pupils. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. This provision caters for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector did deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector spoke to leaders about the curriculum and met with teachers from the lessons visited. The inspector looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils.
- The inspector listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.

- The inspector met with the SENCo and members of the local governing body, as well as speaking to the local authority school development partner for teaching, learning and assessment.
- The inspector looked at the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks and spoke to leaders, teachers, trustees and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector considered the 77 responses made by parents to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, plus 76 free-text responses, 101 pupil survey responses and 23 Ofsted staff surveys.
- The inspector also visited the school's additional resource provision.

### **Inspection team**

David Milligan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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