

Inspection of Whitelands Park Primary School

Sagecroft Road, Thatcham, Berkshire RG18 3FH

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of attending Whitelands Park. Staff know pupils and their families really well. They keep pupils safe and well cared for. Pupils love coming to this school and enjoy their friendships. Staff and pupils get on extremely well and treat each other with kindness and respect.

Leaders have high aspirations for pupils. They want every pupil to be ambitious for themselves and to broaden their horizons. Children in early years get off to the strong start they need. For example, they quickly learn how to work and play well together.

Leaders ensure that pupils' behaviour is managed consistently and fairly across the school. In lessons and around the school site, pupils try hard to make the right choices. If bullying happens, it is dealt with effectively. Pupils work hard and focus on their learning.

Leaders are keen for pupils to learn about life beyond their community, for example by visiting the seaside or Windsor Castle. They are mindful of cost not being a barrier to participation and trips are closely linked to the curriculum. Parents also value the thoughtful enrichment activities on offer. These include a variety of clubs that allow pupils to develop their talents and wider interests. These also support their cultural and social development well.

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

Leaders have sensibly sought advice to assure themselves about the quality of their relentless improvement work since the last inspection. Leaders, and those with responsibility for governance, are not complacent. They have a clear sense of the priorities and how to tackle them. For example, leaders continue to refine an ambitious and broad curriculum. Reading, mathematics and music are consistently well planned and sequenced. Leaders have set out clearly the detailed knowledge and subject-specific skills that pupils need in each curriculum. They have made sure that pupils learn in a logical order. Teachers think carefully about the activities they choose so that pupils learn what they intend in an enjoyable way. Pupils especially like the frequent recapping and checking of their knowledge that teachers do, as this helps them to remember what they have been taught. However, in the writing, speaking and listening elements of the English curriculum, this is not yet fully the case. Leaders are aware and have plans to address this.

Staff are quick to identify and provide extra help for those who need it. However, leaders are continuing to refine their approach for supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders are aware that pupils with SEND would benefit from more precise support to help them achieve even more. Currently, the adaptations made to teaching, including some interventions, are not always effective or checked often enough. This sometimes prevents pupils building their knowledge of the curriculum securely.

Leaders quickly identify pupils who may need extra help with learning to read as soon as they join the school. In Year 1, staff provide pupils with extra daily sessions and additional time to practise reading aloud with a skilled adult. Pupils are beginning to read much more for pleasure. Pupils clearly appreciate reading a wide variety of books from the library, situated at the heart of the school. In the early years, children relish sharing books and actively seek out adults to tell them the sounds that letters represent. This builds the confidence and curiosity to learn even more.

Pupils behave well and work hard in lessons, showing a strong desire to succeed. The foundations of this positive culture are firmly laid in early years. There is a very small minority of pupils whose behaviour can, at times, disrupt others' learning. However, leaders take effective action to address this and minimise any impact.

Pupils' personal development is prioritised. Pupils learn about a range of important issues, including healthy relationships, as well as the importance of having good physical and mental health. Pupils can join a wide range of clubs, such as fencing, two different choirs, art, netball and a construction kit club. The school provides growing opportunities that develop pupils' character and sense of responsibility. For example, some pupils are members of the charities club. In this role, they make important decisions about how the school chooses a variety of good causes. This helps raise awareness of issues and provides financial support.

The trust board and governors have an accurate view of the schools' strengths and priorities. Both groups work effectively together to challenge and support the school. They work well alongside ambitious leaders to develop clear, strategic plans, and check that these are working as intended. Staff appreciate leaders' care for their well-being. They also know that leaders consider their workload and do not add to it unnecessarily.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe because of the strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are trained effectively, vigilant and very well supported. They understand the school's processes for raising concerns and use them appropriately. Leaders act with tenacity to get extra help for pupils who need it. Pupils are clear about what to do if they are worried about something. They know that an adult in school will always help them if they need it. Leaders' positive interactions with external partners are a real strength. Checks on adults working in the school are thorough, recorded accurately and checked regularly by governors.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' curriculum thinking in the writing, speaking and listening elements of the English curriculum is not clear enough. Pupils are not consistently building knowledge and skills logically, in a precise sequence. This means that pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. Leaders need to continue their work to make sure that these aspects of English are planned and implemented to the high standards evident in mathematics, reading and music so that pupils receive a quality education consistent across all subject areas.
- Although teachers understand the needs of pupils with SEND, they are not always reflected precisely enough in pupils' learning targets. Consequently, help for pupils during lessons or interventions is not always updated and matched well enough to help them make rapid progress with their learning. Leaders should ensure that all staff clearly understand pupils' learning needs, update the plans and use agreed support strategies consistently well during lessons.

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.

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

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| Unique reference number | 140407 |
| Local authority | West Berkshire |
| Inspection number | 10226872 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 392 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Michael Cole |
| Headteacher | Matthew Irving |
| Website | www.whitlandsparkprimary.co.uk/ |
| Dates of previous inspection | 13 and 14 July 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Whitelands Park Primary is an academy, sponsored by Kennet Schools Academy Trust.
- The school provides and manages a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The number of pupils on roll is higher than when the school was last inspected.
- The substantive special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) began working at the school in mid-September 2022. Previously, the school had been without a permanent SENCO for a significant period of the last academic year.

Information about this inspection

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

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

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the SENCO.
- The lead inspector met with two governors, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the trust board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history, English and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed curriculum planning with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at their work. The lead inspector also heard pupils read to a known adult.
- Inspectors checked a wide range of safeguarding documentation and school policies, including the single central record. They also reviewed the school's records regarding child protection and welfare of pupils.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan and relevant school policies.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, along with their written comments. Inspectors also talked with parents on the morning and afternoon of the first day of inspection.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views about their learning, what behaviour is like at the school and whether they felt safe. Inspectors also talked to pupils about their views on personal development and the wider school curriculum.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff to gather their views on how leaders support them and took account of their responses to the staff survey, including written comments.

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Gareth Flemington, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Jill Digweed | Ofsted Inspector |
| Jon Hills | Ofsted Inspector |

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