

Inspection of a good school: Whittle-le-Woods Church of England Primary School

Preston Road, Whittle-le-Woods, Chorley, Lancashire PR6 7PS

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 February 2023

Outcome

Whittle-le-Woods Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils live the school's vision and values to 'flourish, serve others courageously and be excited to learn' through everything they do. Pupils develop into extremely inquisitive learners. They thrive in this school community and feel happy and safe. Leaders and staff have very high expectations and aspirations of pupils' behaviour and learning. Pupils live up to these.

Pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is exemplary. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils show compassion for one another. Older pupils care for younger children and help them to resolve friendship issues. Staff respond swiftly to help pupils with any disagreements. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with well.

Staff provide pupils with a wealth of experiences to deepen their learning. Classrooms across the school are filled with a purposeful buzz. This positivity spills out into breaktimes where pupils enjoy being with their friends. Academic, musical and sporting talents are all valued and celebrated. Pupils enjoy many leadership roles, such as school councillors, subject ambassadors and eco club leaders. These experiences support their character development.

Leaders regularly invite parents and the local community to the school. Parents speak highly of the school and appreciate the warm, nurturing and family feel within the school.

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

Leaders have designed a highly ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have identified the key knowledge they want pupils to master. Pupils make strong connections in their learning between different subjects. This helps pupils build on what

they know already. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is planned so that pupils extend their vocabulary in each subject. For example, in Reception, children learning about space were able to explain the idea of orbiting while role playing the first moon landing. From the time children join the early years, they begin to learn essential facts and skills that they strengthen and build on from one year to the next. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, achieve exceptionally well.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use their expertise to explain new learning clearly. Teachers routinely revisit earlier learning to ensure that pupils' knowledge is secure. This helps pupils to recall what they already know and remember. For instance, in Year 1, teachers had expertly chosen mathematics activities to consolidate pupils' number knowledge. Teachers use a range of assessment strategies. This helps them to understand how well pupils have learned new knowledge and to quickly address any gaps or pupil errors.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils become avid readers and learn good reading habits. They enjoy daily story times, opportunities to attend book clubs and a library full of inspiring books. Children in the early stages of learning to read make rapid progress. Staff are well trained to teach phonics using an effective systematic programme. Pupils access books that are carefully matched to the sounds they know. This helps them to practise their reading and grow in confidence. Pupils who need extra support are identified quickly and given prompt help by highly skilled staff.

Staff are relentlessly ambitious for every pupil, irrespective of need. Staff identify pupils who may have SEND quickly and effectively. Leaders draw on the wealth of staff expertise, and deploy a range of effective approaches, to enable these pupils to access the same challenging curriculum as their peers.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. Pupils work hard and enthusiastically in lessons. They listen carefully to their teachers and collaborate well. These behaviours ensure that pupils work diligently and that their learning is rarely disrupted.

Leaders' vision for pupils to become 'courageous advocates' extends beyond the classroom. Leaders encourage pupils to become responsible and healthy citizens. Pupils recognise that their confidence and resilience develop while at school. Much of this comes from the many opportunities that pupils are given to develop their talents and interests. Many pupils are involved in learning to play instruments or a range of sports. Pupils flourish in leadership roles and spoke proudly about how they have made a positive contribution to the school and the wider community.

Governors are very knowledgeable and are regular visitors to school. They play a keen role in supporting leaders to fulfil their roles effectively. Governors have a strong oversight of the curriculum. They challenge leaders about pupils' achievement across a range of subjects while also maintaining a strong focus on pupils' personal development, well-being and safety. There is a strong culture of mutual support and teamwork among the staff. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support and consideration they receive from school leaders. All staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have embedded a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff know the pupils well and receive regular training to understand the risks and potential dangers pupils may face. All staff follow a careful system for reporting and monitoring concerns. Leaders respond promptly to provide support for vulnerable pupils and their families. They work proactively with other agencies and are relentless in getting extra support for pupils who need it.

Pupils learn about well-being and mental health through the curriculum. They learn how to stay safe online and more widely in their community. Pupils know the importance of reporting any concerns to adults.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2012.

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

Unique reference number	119478
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10240225
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Emma Last
Headteacher	Deborah Metcalfe
Website	whittleprimary.com/
Date of previous inspection	6 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary aided Church of England school in the Diocese of Blackburn. The last section 48 inspection took place in September 2017.
- Leaders do not currently make use of alternative provision for any pupils.
- The governing body is responsible for before- and after-school provision at the school.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. This involved visiting lessons with subject leaders, discussing subject curriculums, talking to pupils and teachers, and looking at pupils' work. He also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes, lunchtime and during lessons. He also talked to pupils about their views of the school.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. He also considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff.
- The inspector checked leaders' safeguarding procedures. He scrutinised a range of safeguarding documentation and considered how safeguarding incidents are managed and recorded.

Inspection team

James Blackwell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
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