

Inspection of a good school: Whitehall Primary School

90 Normanton Park, London E4 6ES

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 February 2023

Outcome

Whitehall Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils said that they love coming to school because everyone is kind. They enjoy learning and participating in enrichment activities. Pupils have access to many trusted adults with whom they can raise any concerns that they may have. As a result, pupils feel safe. Staff promote pupils' welfare very well. New leaders have taken several effective steps to improve site security. They keep this under regular review.

Leaders are ambitious and inclusive. They strive for every pupil to succeed academically and build a strong awareness of social responsibility. From Reception through to Year 6, pupils learn a broad range of subjects, including French, for example. Appropriate adaptations and support are put in place for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This supports all pupils with SEND, including those with a hearing impairment, to access the curriculum and all other school activities.

As part of their work to create a respectful environment, staff promote pupils' understanding that all people have equal rights and responsibilities. This helps to foster a calm and purposeful ambience around the school. When pupils have tiffs, or should there be bullying, staff facilitate restorative conversations. On occasion, older pupils are keen to sort out their disagreements independently, as they have the maturity and vocabulary to do so.

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

Leaders have, over the past few years, put much thought into developing the curriculum. Early years staff and subject leaders plan together. They aim to ensure that children leave Reception with the foundational knowledge they need to succeed when entering Year 1.

The teaching of reading is at the top of the school's agenda. Staff have the required expertise to deliver a well-sequenced early reading programme. Phonics begins at the start of Reception. Staff keep a close eye on all pupils' progress and quickly help them to catch up if they fall behind. Specialist staff use a bespoke phonics programme to meet the

specific needs of some pupils with hearing impairments. Across the school, pupils love their story times. Pupils develop a love of reading and become confident and fluent readers.

Leaders have given much thought to developing their subjects, drawing appropriately on external expertise. They have planned logically the knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember. Staff are provided with an ongoing programme of professional development. This supports teachers to gain expertise across the subjects. Leaders are adept at identifying and planning for pupils with SEND. Leaders make sure that teachers and support staff gain the knowledge and skills needed to support those pupils effectively.

Teachers check often on pupils' understanding and address any emerging gaps and misconceptions. They give pupils constructive guidance, so that they can correct and learn from their mistakes. Pupils are confident to ask for extra help if they feel unsure about something. Pupils said that staff are happy to help them, even outside of class time. Pupils' overall achievement is strong.

There are, however, a few aspects in a small number of subjects that are not as effective as they could be. When delivering a series of lessons in one subject, teaching is sometimes interspersed with lessons in a second subject. This is because leaders want pupils to be able to make links in their knowledge. Occasionally, however, this is not done purposefully. This is because leaders and teachers are unclear about the exact knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember in this second subject. As a result, pupils do not build up and deepen their knowledge as well as they could. Across all subjects, teachers give pupils tasks designed to help them retrieve knowledge and recall prior learning. In a few cases, these activities are not thought through sufficiently well. This is because some are not focused enough on supporting pupils to remember subject content in the long term.

In the early years, children are encouraged to be inquisitive. They pay close attention to activities for extended periods, both when working independently and with staff. Pupils work hard and are keen to succeed. When the odd low-level disruption occurs, staff step in and deal with it quickly. This allows learning to continue uninterrupted.

Pupils value being taught philosophy. They enjoy opportunities to debate current affairs and controversial issues. In seeking election to the school or eco-councils, candidates prepare manifestos and speak at hustings. They are elected by their peers at the ballot box. Thus, pupils experience democracy in practice. The school council, at their initiative, arranged and ran a clothing exchange at the school. Leaders provide pupils with many enrichment activities outside of the classroom. These include visits to museums, art galleries and places of worship. There are many after-school clubs available, such as drama, sports and coding. Every year, older pupils give a public performance of a chosen Shakespearian play.

Staff are appreciative of the steps that leaders have taken to reduce their workload. They said work expectations, such as collating assessment information, are not onerous.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to be alert to any changes that may indicate that a pupil may be at risk and need help. Staff report their concerns to safeguarding leaders, who take quick and appropriate action. They refer pupils to the school's four counsellors or external agencies to help pupils and their families get the support that they need to stay safe.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn about risk, how to avoid dangerous situations and how to seek help should they need it.

Leaders follow appropriate vetting procedures when appointing new staff to check their suitability for working with pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, curriculum leaders have not fully refined their thinking and considered how implementation in lessons should support pupils to habitually build and remember detailed subject-specific knowledge. As a result, pupils' knowledge is not deepened as successfully as it could be. Leaders should ensure that, in all subjects, the identified key subject disciplinary and conceptual knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember are implemented effectively.

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	103036
Local authority	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10255477
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	468
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Aletha Saunders (co-chair) Kenny Frederick (co-chair)
Headteacher	Zakia Khatun
Website	www.whitehallprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	26 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been many changes to the school's leadership and staffing since the time of the last inspection. The current headteacher took up her post in September 2019. There has been a restructure of the governing body. The current co-chairs were appointed in October 2022. The post of special educational needs coordinator has been increased from part time to full time and leaders created an additional post of an inclusion support officer.
- The school provides 13 places in a specially resourced provision for pupils in Nursery to Year 6 with hearing impairments.
- School leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

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 school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, and other leaders. He met with the co-chairs of the governing body and five other governors. He had a telephone conversation with the local authority deputy director of children's services.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, he met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. He also spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- The inspector checked the school's policies and records and spoke with the designated safeguarding leader, senior leaders, governors, pupils and staff to check on the school's culture of safeguarding.
- The inspector had formal meetings with staff and with pupils. He took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, which included some written comments. He also considered email communications received from parents and other stakeholders plus a letter delivered to the school. He also spoke with some parents who asked for a meeting. He also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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