

Inspection of Whitstone Primary School

Oak Lane, Whitstone, Holsworthy, Devon EX22 6TH

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2023

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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations of every pupil at Whitstone Primary School. They make sure that pupils learn an ambitious curriculum. Pupils understand the school's 'GROW' values well. They explain how the curriculum helps them to be reflective, curious, motivated and part of a community.

Pupils are happy at school. They say this is because of the kindness that everyone shows and because they enjoy their learning. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Staff are clear about how they expect pupils to behave. Staff and pupils say that the school feels like a family. They form positive and respectful relationships.

Older and younger pupils learn and play happily together. Pupils appreciate the wide range of clubs that staff organise, such as the school choir. These build their confidence and develop their talents.

Staff work together to keep pupils safe. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils trust staff to deal with any concerns they have.

Leaders trust pupils with important responsibilities. Pupils can apply to join the school's junior leadership team. This group helps the school improve. It has created a reading buddy system, improved the play at lunchtime and organised community events.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum which is based firmly on the school's values. The curriculum starts from the early years. It sets out clearly the knowledge that pupils will gain in a broad range of subjects. As a result, pupils develop detailed and secure knowledge. For example, the youngest pupils can explain in detail the differences between reptiles, mammals and birds. The oldest pupils have a precise understanding of the history of transatlantic slavery.

Leaders have put reading at the heart of the curriculum. Teachers deepen pupils' learning across the curriculum with relevant and interesting books. Teachers read regularly to pupils. They recommend books that will interest pupils and broaden their knowledge. Older pupils regularly read with younger pupils. Pupils across the school read widely.

Pupils learn phonics as soon as they start school. Well-trained staff lead daily groups. Pupils read books that match the sounds that they know. Staff regularly check that pupils are learning to read well. They help pupils to catch up if they are falling behind.

Older pupils read and answer questions about high-quality texts. However, leaders have not thought enough about how to develop the reading of older pupils further. As a result, pupils are unable to articulate in depth their understanding of what they read.

Mathematics is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy mathematics. They develop secure knowledge of important mathematics facts and procedures. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They present information clearly. Teachers regularly check to see what pupils have understood. They help pupils with gaps or misconceptions. Learning builds on what pupils know and can do. Pupils say that routines such as 'knowledge checkpoints' help them to recall important learning.

In the foundation stage, teachers help pupils to learn new vocabulary. They expect pupils to answer in full sentences. However, this expectation is not consistent across other classes. Some teachers do not ask pupils to discuss their learning. This means that pupils are unable to explain their thinking or practise the new vocabulary they are learning.

Leaders make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the whole curriculum. They identify the specific needs of pupils with SEND. They help staff to meet these. Staff work with pupils sensitively and effectively. Pupils take a full part in all aspects of school life.

Pupils know and understand the school rules. Staff use reminders about behaviour, such as 'show me five'. Pupils respond well to these. Lessons flow without interruption. Pupils show respect to others. They work hard.

Teachers support pupils in their personal development well. Pupils learn how to stay healthy, physically and mentally. They learn how to relate to others. Leaders provide a wide programme of additional events and opportunities. All pupils take part in this programme.

The headteacher develops the leadership skills of others effectively. Each subject leader confidently leads a wide range of curriculum subjects. Subject leaders have a secure understanding of the subjects they lead and how well pupils are learning. The interim executive board provides expertise, challenge and support for staff. Everyone works together to achieve the aims of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders train all staff to recognise risks. Staff report any concerns that they have to leaders. Leaders take swift and effective actions in response. They keep detailed records of their actions.

Leaders have a strong understanding of the school's community. They use this to adapt the curriculum. Pupils learn useful and relevant information about keeping

themselves safe, including online. Staff build positive relationships with pupils. Pupils feel confident to tell staff any worries that they have.

Leaders make careful checks on all the adults who work at the school. The interim executive board closely monitors the school's safeguarding systems.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The small steps of knowledge about reading that pupils in key stage 2 will learn have not yet been clearly identified. This means that pupils do not always discuss their reading in as much depth as they could. Leaders should identify more precisely the detailed knowledge about reading that pupils in key stage 2 will learn.
- Expectations of pupils' spoken language are not consistent. In some lessons, pupils are not given the opportunity to explain their thinking and discuss their learning in detail. Leaders should implement a curriculum for spoken language that allows pupils to develop their knowledge and skills across the school.

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	111941
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10256702
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Vanessa Bragg
Headteacher	Hannah Mould
Website	http://www.whitstone.cornwall.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	26–27 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- An interim executive board was appointed to the school in April 2022.
- Leaders do not make any use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, subject leaders, teachers, groups of pupils and the interim executive board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: history, early reading and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They reviewed how well the designated safeguarding leads act on concerns about pupils' welfare. Inspectors talked to pupils, staff and the interim executive board about how leaders keep everyone safe.
- Inspectors considered the 12 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including nine free-text responses. They also considered the six responses to the staff survey and the four responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Jonathan Gower, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Karen Thomson

Ofsted Inspector

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