

Inspection of a good school: Whitehouse Common Primary School

Cotysmore Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B75 6BL

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 June 2023

Outcome

Whitehouse Common Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this happy and vibrant school and feel safe. Staff know pupils well and help them to become confident, independent learners. Leaders have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). English and mathematics sit at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils achieve particularly well in these areas. Pupils also develop secure knowledge in most other subjects.

Pupils behave well. Teachers establish clear rules and routines in the early years. Older pupils are proud to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour. Pupils of all ages listen attentively in lessons and complete tasks diligently. They are unfailingly polite to adults and to each other. Pupils understand that everyone is different. They talk about there being 'no outsiders in our school'. Pupils are quick to include others who may feel left out, for example in lessons and at social times.

Leaders make excellent use of the school's extensive grounds to keep pupils fit and active. All pupils benefit from outdoor learning. Social times are great fun because of the range of activities on offer. There is a buzz of excitement as pupils take part in activities such as football coaching, tennis, knitting and construction.

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

Children get off to a flying start in the early years. Staff prioritise the right things. They immerse children in stories and rhymes. Children learn familiar texts off by heart. Staff are clear about what they want children to know at each stage of their learning. They craft their teaching carefully to make sure that all children learn what staff intend.

The curriculum in key stages 1 and 2 builds on these strong foundations. In most subjects, leaders have identified the essential knowledge they want pupils to learn. This knowledge builds in a logical order towards ambitious outcomes. For example, in art and design, pupils learn different techniques each term. They use these to produce

increasingly sophisticated pieces of artwork. In a very small number of subjects, leaders and teachers are less clear about the specific knowledge they want pupils to learn. Their checks on what pupils understand and remember are also less precise. As a result, pupils' knowledge is not as secure as it is in other subjects.

Teaching pupils to read is a high priority. Pupils in Reception and Year 1 learn phonics every day. In reading sessions, pupils use their phonic knowledge to read books that match closely the sounds they are learning. Staff promote a love of reading. For example, leaders put their favourite books on display for pupils to borrow. Almost all pupils are fluent readers by the end of Year 2.

Staff receive regular training so that they can deliver the curriculum well. Teachers explain concepts clearly to pupils and address any misunderstandings quickly. There is a well-understood process for identifying if pupils have any additional needs. Staff meet the needs of pupils with SEND effectively. Most of these pupils learn the same things as other pupils at a pace that is appropriate for them. A small number of pupils follow an individual curriculum. This equips them with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed.

In many subjects, teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to practise what they have learned. This helps pupils to remember important content. For example, in mathematics, pupils rehearse number facts every day. As a result, they can calculate efficiently when working on time and measures. Teachers check what pupils understand and remember. They use this information to shape what they teach next and to identify pupils who need additional support.

Lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils work hard and want to do the right thing. They are proud to earn rewards, such as a weekly achievement leaf and half-termly golden time. Teachers know which pupils need extra help to manage their feelings and behaviour. Staff work closely with these pupils so that they are ready and able to learn.

Pupils learn about different cultures and traditions through links with schools in other countries. For example, they talk enthusiastically about the 'La Tomatina' festival in Spain. All pupils learn to swim and play a musical instrument. Events such as the termly poetry recital and annual dance show help pupils to grow in confidence. Pupils can take on different responsibilities to develop their leadership skills. These include being restaurant managers at lunchtime, peer mediators and eco-councillors.

Governors have systems in place to assure themselves that leaders' actions are making a difference to pupils' learning. They are aware of staff's workload and have taken some steps to help manage this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide regular training to ensure that staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff are alert to signs that might indicate a pupil is at risk of harm. They report concerns promptly to leaders, who take appropriate action. Vulnerable pupils

receive bespoke support to address their needs. Leaders keep a close eye on how these pupils are doing.

Pupils learn about the risks of being online, and how to manage these. They know what to do if someone behaves in a way that makes them, or someone else, feel unsafe or upset. Pupils know that they can rely on staff to support them if they need help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a very small number of subjects, leaders have not set out the specific knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. As a result, teachers are not clear about what they need to focus their teaching on. In these subjects, assessment strategies do not help staff to check that pupils have remembered the significant knowledge they need for future learning. Leaders should make sure that teachers are clear about the essential chunks of knowledge they want pupils to learn in all subjects. Assessment strategies should help staff to check that pupils understand and remember this important content.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 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.

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	132007
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10257012
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	456
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Robert Crosson
Headteacher	Fiona Milward
Website	www.whitehousecommon.bham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 December 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The governing body manages a before- and after-school club. This club is registered and inspected separately from the school. The last inspection took place in January 2020.
- The school does not currently use 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 leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders. She met with groups of staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- The inspector met with the chair of the governing body and three governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited

a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at pupils' work.

- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils read and talked with pupils about their reading.
- The inspector met with groups of pupils. She also spoke with pupils in lessons and at social times. The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- The inspector met with leaders about the school's safeguarding procedures. She reviewed policies and records relating to safeguarding and bullying. The inspector spoke with pupils, parents and staff about pupils' safety.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including information on the school's website, the school's self-evaluation and leaders' improvement plans.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. She took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Claire Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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