

# Inspection of a good school: Whetstone Field Primary School

Beaufort Way, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands WS9 0HJ

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Inspection dates:

3 and 4 October 2023

## Outcome

Whetstone Field Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Whetstone Field is a warm and welcoming place to learn. The school has high ambitions for every pupil, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff want all children to flourish. The school has embedded its values of resilience, respect, curiosity, aspiration, kindness and creativity in many aspects of school life. Pupils speak confidently about why these values are important.

Pupils behave well in class and around school. They have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy earning behaviour points to be able to wear non-school uniform for a day. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour at this school. Pupils are confident that staff will sort any issues out quickly should they arise.

Pupils have many responsibilities in school, such as being school councillors or playleaders. Some also act as class ambassadors. These pupils are always keen to talk to visitors and explain what they are learning in lessons. They believe these roles are important.

Parents are extremely positive about all aspects of the school. They have lots of positive things to say. One parent summed up the views of many when they said, 'Whetstone is a nurturing school and has a very good sense of community.'

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

The school has carefully considered the knowledge and skills pupils will learn in most subjects. This includes children's learning in early years. In many subjects, leaders have designed a curriculum that builds this knowledge and skills in a logical order. This is helping teachers to teach pupils the right things at the right time. Consequently, pupils are achieving well. In Nursery, for example, children quickly learn how to recognise a small number of objects without counting. This prepares them well for mathematics in key stage 1. However, in a few subjects, some of the key knowledge that pupils are expected to know and remember is not as clear or is too broad. This means teachers do not always

teach the most important knowledge. As a result, some pupils struggle to remember what the school wants them to learn in these areas.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain new learning clearly to pupils. They make learning interesting and, as a result, pupils focus on their work and there is little disruption to learning. Teachers regularly check on pupils' learning in lessons and adapt their teaching to respond to any issues.

The school places a high priority in developing a love of reading. Pupils are read to widely and often and they enjoy listening to and discussing stories. Every class visits a local library regularly. Leaders have updated the way they teach phonics. Phonics lessons are planned in a way that builds on what pupils already know. Furthermore, the books pupils read are well matched to the sounds they know. All of this means that most pupils develop into confident and fluent readers. However, some staff do not always use the school's agreed approach consistently. Sometimes, for example, staff do not pronounce sounds accurately or make sure all pupils have sufficient opportunities to practise the sounds they are learning. This slows some pupils' learning.

Pupils with SEND achieve well. Adults quickly identify pupils who may have additional needs and how best to support them. Staff know pupils with SEND and their needs well. They ensure that these pupils receive effective help and support in lessons and through targeted interventions. The school has ensured that relationships with parents of pupils with SEND are strong.

Pupils are proud of their school and show a keenness to learn. This is evident in the focus they apply in lessons. They find learning stimulating and interesting. Pupils listen well to their teachers and show a determination to work as hard as they can.

The school provides wide opportunities for pupils beyond the curriculum, such as trips to a Roman town and an arboretum. There are many clubs for pupils to attend. These are nearly all linked to sports. Pupils are looking forward to other clubs due to be introduced soon, such as an art club. Pupils feel that staff are interested in their talents and interests. The school supports this well and pupils are keen for their photos to be added to a display board in the hall celebrating their talents.

Governors know the school well. They make good use of questionnaires from staff, parents and pupils to ensure this. Staff feel that leaders manage their workload particularly well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not deliver the school's phonics programme consistently well. This means that a small number of pupils do not keep pace with the school's phonics programme. The school should ensure that all staff know how to deliver the phonics programme successfully.
- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum does not clearly identify the key knowledge that the school wants pupils to know and remember. As a result, some teachers do not always teach pupils the most important knowledge they need for future learning. This means pupils do not always know and remember the intended learning in these subjects. The school should ensure that all curriculum subjects make clear the important knowledge they want pupils to learn.

## 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 September 2014.

## 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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium](#)

[funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104198
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10294509
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	233
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Kevin Thorley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stuart Cox
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.whetstonefield.co.uk">www.whetstonefield.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provider.
- The school operates a before- and after-school club.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher. He also met four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. He met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and viewed examples of pupils' work. The inspector also held meetings with the art and design and geography subject leaders.
- The inspector observed children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 read to a trusted adult.
- The inspector spoke with members of staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- The inspector considered the responses, including the free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View. He also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys. The inspector spoke to parents at the end of the school day.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, school improvement priorities, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, behaviour records, attendance records and minutes of meetings held by the governing body.

### **Inspection team**

Barry Yeadsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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