

Inspection of a good school: Whitehouse Primary School

Dunelm Road, Elm Tree, Whitehouse Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees TS19 0TS

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 October 2023

Outcome

Whitehouse Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are friendly and welcoming in this inclusive school. They take part in projects to understand and celebrate each other's differences. Pupils have strong relationships with staff. They know they can go to a trusted adult with any concerns that they may have.

Pupils' well-being is effectively promoted. They enjoy physical education lessons. A wide range of clubs are offered, such as yoga and dance. Younger pupils gain confidence in the water before they take swimming lessons. Pupils also know that their mental well-being is important.

Teachers make classrooms calm and purposeful places to learn. Pupils work diligently and are eager to do their best. They enjoy breaktimes and value the opportunity to catch up with friends. Staff deal with rare instances of poor behaviour well.

Pupils enjoy listening to the class story at the end of the day. Pupils share their enthusiasm about the different books they have read. Leaders have ensured that the stories cover a wide variety of subjects written by a diverse range of authors.

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

Staff teach the reading curriculum well and pupils learn to read quickly. In lessons, pupils are gradually introduced to new sounds. They read books using the sounds they know. Staff make regular checks on pupils' reading. If pupils fall behind with their reading, the school takes swift action to make sure they catch up. Pupils become confident, fluent readers and enjoy a wide range of literature.

Pupils learn mathematics well. Teachers help pupils by explaining mathematics clearly. They demonstrate new learning and provide the right amount of guidance until pupils can

work independently. Teachers ask probing mathematical questions to check pupils' knowledge. They intervene promptly with more help when pupils' struggle.

The school has high ambitions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff know pupils well. Most pupils get the support they need and access the resources they need. On occasions, some pupils with SEND do not have their support targeted precisely enough. Leaders know this and plans are underway to address this.

The curriculums in subjects such as history, science and computing outline the knowledge pupils should know by the end of a topic. However, the steps pupils need to take to gain this knowledge are not mapped out clearly enough. Teachers introduce a wide range of information. However, this information does not consistently build on what pupils already know. This contributes to some gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Children settle quickly into the early years. They benefit from a well-structured approach to reading and mathematics. Sometimes, staff miss opportunities to extend and deepen children's language and vocabulary. Leaders' plans to build children's communication skills are at a very early stage, so they have yet to make a difference.

In lessons, pupils apply themselves well and follow teachers' instructions. Attendance is carefully monitored. Poor attendance is tackled promptly. Leaders work well with different agencies to boost attendance.

There are a good range of opportunities to prepare pupils for the next stage in their education and the world beyond school. Visits to local businesses help pupils to learn about the world of work. Challenge days give pupils the opportunity to work together and solve problems. A recent art project helped them explore diversity.

Staff appreciate the stability brought to leadership following a period of change. Subject leaders are supported to fulfil their roles. Governors have taken steps to sustain recent school improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In foundation subjects and in science, the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn has not been mapped out clearly enough. This leads to some gaps in pupils' knowledge in these subjects. The school should prioritise the teaching of the most important knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn in these subjects.
- On occasions, some pupils with SEND do not receive the precise support that they need. The school should further enhance plans to identify the small steps these pupils need to take to improve their learning.

- The school does not consistently extend or deepen communication skills for those children in early years who need this the most. Leaders should implement plans to boost children’s language and communication as quickly as possible.

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 January 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 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

Unique reference number	111549
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10290003
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	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ian Brown
Acting Headteacher	Jane Eyre
Website	www.whitehousepri.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has undergone several changes in leadership and staffing since the previous inspection. The acting headteacher and acting assistant headteacher were appointed in September 2023.
- School leaders are receiving support from the 1590 multi-academy trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school operates a breakfast club 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 her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the acting headteacher, acting assistant headteacher, members of the governing body, representatives from the 1590 multi-academy trust and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector reviewed the curriculum in some other subjects as well as the curriculum for pupils with SEND.
- 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 reviewed school documentation, spoke to staff with different responsibilities and had discussions with pupils about aspects of school life.
- The inspector considered the responses and the free-text comments on Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. She also considered responses from the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Susan Waugh, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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