

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Whitegate CofE Primary School

Whitegate, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 2AY

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 November 2024

Outcome

Whitegate CofE Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are greeted each morning by Buddy and Reggie, the friendly school nurture dogs. They help pupils to develop confidence and to build self-esteem. Pupils say that everyone is welcome here. They feel well-cared for by staff at this school who know them well. Pupils are proud to belong to this warm and friendly school which is at the heart of the local community.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They listen carefully to their teachers and they love to learn new ideas. Pupils relish the opportunity to ask questions and debate different points of view. During their time at Whitegate, pupils develop a relentless curiosity about the world in which they live.

The school has high aspirations for pupils' achievement. Pupils achieve well and they leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils benefit from the many opportunities offered by the school. They enjoy trying new activities and honing their skills and talents in music and drama. Pupils are especially proud of the school's annual productions where they can dance, act and sing. Sport plays an important part in school life. Pupils are rightly proud of their success in sports events and competitions.

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

Reading is given a high priority. The phonics programme starts swiftly in the Reception class. By the end of key stage 1, most pupils are successful in learning to read. Those pupils who struggle to keep up with their peers get the help that they need to catch up

from well-trained staff. By the time that pupils leave the school in Year 6, they are fluent and accurate readers.

The school has carefully designed each subject's curriculum. Staff are given all the information that they need so that they know what to teach and when to teach it. In the main, pupils are progressing well through each curriculum. They are remembering their learning. However, in a small number of subjects other than English and mathematics, some pupils are not learning as well as they could. This is because sometimes staff do not design activities which help pupils to remember new learning or avoid misconceptions.

In all subjects, there are regular checks on what pupils are learning. However, in some subjects other than English and mathematics, this information is not shared well enough beyond each classroom. This means that the school does not have a deep enough understanding of what pupils know and can do. This prevents the school from making any necessary changes to the curriculum and stops pupils from learning as well as they could.

The additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are recognised swiftly. Staff are adept at identifying pupils who would benefit from additional support. Skilled staff work with pupils with SEND to enable them to access the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils with more complex needs learn all that they should as set out in their individualised learning plans.

Pupils benefit from a very well-thought-out offer for personal development. This enables their learning to be enriched, for example through a range of trips and visits. Pupils know about different faiths and celebrate what makes people different. They are highly respectful. Their awareness about the world is developed through a weekly news focus. When asked to consider both national and global events, pupils are encouraged to think deeply. They have the confidence to engage in lively discussion. Pupils are encouraged to develop their leadership skills, such as becoming school councillors or head boy and girl. They help to organise events which include raising money for local charities. As a result, pupils are well-prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils behave very well at breaktimes and around school. In the lunch hall, pupils are well-mannered. In the playground, pupils enjoy the range of activities on offer. Pupils of different ages delight in playing games together. They are kind and considerate to one another.

The school prioritises pupils' attendance. For the very small number of pupils who need support, the school takes effective action to improve their attendance. As a result, most pupils attend well.

The governing body know the school well. They offer appropriate challenge to help the school to improve. Governors are especially mindful of staff's well-being and take action to support their workload. As a result, staff feel valued.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, teachers sometimes do not choose activities carefully enough to help pupils commit their learning to their long-term memory. This means that some pupils forget important information. The school should ensure that staff are helped to utilise the training that they have had so that they can help pupils to retain their learning over time.
- In some subjects, the school does not gain a deep enough overview of what pupils know and understand. This limits its ability to revise and update the curriculum to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can over time. The school should ensure that the information from teachers' checks on pupils' learning is used more productively to identify areas of curriculum development.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness on 9 and 10 July 2019.

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

Unique reference number	111338
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10348068
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	151
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Teresa Finney
Headteacher	Caroline Mackenzie
Website	www.whitegate.cheshire.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Chester. Its last section 48 inspection, for schools with a religious character, took place in July 2019. The next inspection is scheduled to take place in the 2026/27 academic year.
- The school offers before-school and after-school provision.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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 the evaluation of the school.
- 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 visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders. She also met with members of the governing body, including the vice chair of the governing body.
- The inspector met with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and breaktimes. She also spoke with pupils about their views of school life.
- The inspector considered the views of parents. She reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector considered the views of staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Frith Murphy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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