

Inspection of Whissendine Church of England Primary School

Main Street, Whissendine, Oakham, Rutland LE15 7ET

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 February 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Sonia Schofield. This school is part of The Rutland Learning Trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO) Rob Gooding, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Richard White.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Whissendine Church of England Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Whissendine Church of England Primary School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as an academy. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

The 'Whissendine DNA' is the bedrock of this remarkable village school. These three core principles, 'Discover', 'Nurture' and 'Achieve', underpin the high-quality education and the exceptional personal development provision on offer. The school's high expectations are reflected in how well pupils achieve in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' commitment to learning and their positive attitudes towards the differences between people are testament to the school's first-rate character education.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They are welcoming and polite. Pupils have an appetite for learning. They try their best, working with great enthusiasm, enjoyment and care. Pupils listen respectfully to staff and their classmates alike. They collaborate and socialise harmoniously. These exemplary traits are established in the school's exceptional early years provision.

Pupils are proud of their school. They attend well. The school is a place they feel welcome, valued, trusted and safe. Pupils embody the school's '6R' values of readiness, respect, resilience, resourcefulness, responsibility and reflection. Staff model these values and refer to them at every opportunity. They teach pupils about inspiring individuals who have exemplified the '6Rs'. The school's 'Amazing People Award' enables pupils to deepen their knowledge of these motivational role models. The school's extensive enrichment offer is excellent.

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

Pupils achieve exceptionally well in English and mathematics, year after year. These impressive outcomes are founded on the excellent start that children make in the Reception Class. In the early years, there is a sharp focus on developing children's communication and language skills. Children have frequent opportunities to secure their understanding of early number too.

The school's curriculum is ambitious and well-designed. Leaders have thought carefully about the journey that pupils will take through the curriculum so that pupils in mixed-age classes will cover the same content. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can access the curriculum and succeed. The school identifies additional needs swiftly. Teachers make effective adaptations to lessons. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

Teachers explain concepts clearly. They check closely on pupils' understanding in lessons. The development of pupils' vocabulary is a key feature of the curriculum. Teachers introduce new vocabulary and help pupils use these terms. However, the curriculum is not having the full impact that the school intends. In a few subjects, some pupils do not remember key content securely. This is because teachers do not revise and secure important prior learning as frequently as they could in these subjects.

There is a vibrant reading culture at Whissendine. Pupils experience a diverse range of high-quality fiction, non-fiction and poems. As well as developing their understanding of

language, the school has chosen texts to teach pupils about different ways of life. Staff promote the love of reading from the moment children start at the school. Pupils really enjoy the school's weekly 'lost in a book' sessions, choosing which stories they would like to hear. Phonics is taught exceptionally well. The school tracks how well pupils are progressing in phonics closely. If any pupil falls behind, they are given support to catch up. Pupils swiftly learn to read with fluency and confidence.

Early years staff teach children how to be effective learners. They show children how to work on their own and as part of a team. They help children recognise and respond to how they are feeling. Children in the Reception Class sustain their concentration and make the most of all the learning activities on offer. Older pupils build on these firm foundations. Learning behaviours throughout the school are outstanding.

Pupils' personal development is planned meticulously. The school skilfully weaves spiritual, moral, social and cultural education into every facet of school life. Pupils learn about equality and diversity in all subjects. They are interested in the world and all its wonderful differences. The school's character education helps pupils to become well-rounded, fair, resilient, inclusive, confident individuals. Pupils can develop a vast range of talents and interests. There are an abundance of meaningful leadership roles and many opportunities for pupils to support each other's well-being.

Many parents and carers praise the school. They appreciate the high-quality education and care it provides for their children. However, several parents do not feel that the school shares information effectively. Some parents say that the school does not respond to their concerns or listen to their opinions well enough.

Staff enjoy working at Whissendine. The school benefits from strong, passionate leadership at all levels. Local governors and the trust team provide effective challenge and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, staff do not go over key curriculum content as systematically as they could. Consequently, some pupils do not remember what they have been taught in sufficient detail. The school should refine its approach to the retention of important prior learning so that pupils gain a rich body of knowledge in all subjects.
- Several parents do not feel that the school engages with them well enough or communicates effectively. As a result, some parents do not understand the positive changes made at the school. The school should continue to develop ways of working

with families so that all parents feel well informed about their child's education and have opportunities to share their views.

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	141454
Local authority	Rutland Council
Inspection number	10324177
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard White
CEO of the trust	Rob Gooding
Headteacher	Sonia Schofield
Website	www.whissendineschool.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Whissendine Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy in October 2014 as part of The Rutland Learning Trust.
- Whissendine Church of England Primary School is in the Diocese of Peterborough. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school took place in January 2020. This is an inspection of the school's religious character.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered pupils' learning in a range of other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the senior teacher, subject leaders, teachers and support staff. Inspectors also met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, the early years, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents relating to behaviour, attendance and governance, as well as the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read with a familiar adult. Inspectors met with groups of pupils from different year groups.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust.
- The lead inspector met with a trustee and local governors, including the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the results of Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Shaun Carter, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Fielding

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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