

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Whittington C of E Primary School

Whittington, Worcester, Worcestershire WR5 2QZ

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 December 2024

Outcome

Whittington C of E Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a village school with a strong nurturing ethos. The vision for all pupils to 'love, learn and flourish' shapes the highly inclusive curriculum. Pupils learn to be mindful, supportive and tolerant of others. One pupil said, 'You never feel lost here. Everyone belongs.' This comment is typical of many. Pupils are proud of their school. They are happy, safe and secure.

Pupils develop a strong moral code. They are polite and respectful of others. The school provides effective support for those pupils who need more help with behaviour. There are special places where pupils can go if they need to calm down and be ready to learn. The care and support for pupils' well-being are a strength of the school.

The school is ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These ambitions are realised. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils benefit from many clubs on offer, including lunchtime clubs. They enjoy playing an active part in the school and parish community, for example, singing at the local retirement home. These activities help to prepare pupils to be responsible, caring citizens.

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

In most subjects, the curriculum sets out clearly what pupils need to learn from early years through to Year 6. For example, from the Reception Year onwards, children experiment with number and explore number patterns. They learn to use mathematical vocabulary, such as 'more than' and 'less than', as they share their thinking. This helps

children to develop a deep understanding of mathematics and provides a good foundation for Year 1.

The school has introduced extra sessions to help pupils to remember their learning. This is paying off. For example, pupils are now achieving highly in the Year 4 multiplication checks. Pupils study the full range of subjects. Art and music are firm favourites. In a small number of subjects, the redevelopment of the curriculum is still taking shape. The sequencing of curriculum knowledge is not fully developed. This results in some gaps in pupils' knowledge.

In established subjects, pupils draw on what they already know when tackling complex tasks. For example, pupils design and create Christmas cards with mechanisms and intricate decorations for sale at the school's Christmas Fair. They can explain how they are building on their skills from previous design and technology lessons. They transfer their learning from mathematics and science lessons to help their designs. Pupils are able to review and check their work. This helps them to make good progress in building their knowledge.

The school inspires pupils to read widely. This starts in Reception Year where children soon join in with stories, songs and nursery rhymes. Pupils enjoy listening to teachers read aloud daily. This introduces them to new vocabulary and ideas. Staff are skilled in teaching phonics. They use assessment information to identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Pupils receive the support that they need to help them to become confident and fluent readers. Many pupils reach standards above those expected for their age in reading by the time they leave Year 6.

The school does not have the same consistent and rigorous approach to teaching writing skills. As a result, there is variability in the delivery of the curriculum. Some pupils' writing contains errors in spelling, punctuation and basic letter formation over time because basic skills are not secure. This slows pupils' learning down and affects the quality of their written work across subjects.

There is a rise in the number of pupils being identified with SEND. The school has reorganised staffing to ensure that there is enough support where needed. High-quality individual support is in place to ensure that pupils with SEND are able to access the same learning as their classmates at an appropriate level. Pupils with more complex needs receive tailored support from skilled adults. This ensures that most pupils with SEND achieve well. They are welcomed into every aspect of school life.

Pupils' personal development is a high priority. They learn about values such as democracy and equality. They enjoy studying other languages and cultures. They visit different places of worship and say that this helps them to respect faiths that are not their own. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Staff feel that leaders are very considerate of their workload and well-being. They appreciate the opportunities that they have for professional development. There have

been vacancies on the governing body this term. As a result, the governing body has not consistently held the school to account for some aspects of its work.

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, the development of the curriculum has given less consideration to the sequencing of knowledge. As a result, the order in which pupils are taught subject content does not help them to build on their existing understanding. The school should ensure that curriculum sequencing in all subjects provides pupils with the best chance of building their knowledge securely over time.
- The school has not implemented a consistent and rigorous approach to the teaching of writing, including spelling, punctuation and handwriting. As a result, there is variability in the delivery of the curriculum, and pupils' writing contains some errors in basic writing skills over time. The school should ensure that its writing curriculum is delivered consistently well so writing skills improve across the school and pupils apply their skills in their writing.
- Vacancies on the governing body have had a negative impact on how well it has held the school to account for some aspects of its work. The governing body should recruit new governors in order to strengthen its ability to support and challenge the school consistently well.

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 in January 2020.

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	116856
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10371381
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michael Lumley
Headteacher	Kelly Leeming
Website	www.whittington.worcs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England school. The school received its most recent section 48 inspection in May 2024. The next inspection is expected to take place by May 2029.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2024.
- Three governors resigned at the end of July 2024. The vice-chair of governors returned from a three-month sabbatical at the start of December 2024.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at samples of pupils' work with leaders.
- The inspector observed a selection of pupils reading to members of staff. Other pupils were heard read their own work during lessons.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: checked the school's single central record; spoke to senior leaders about safeguarding procedures; took account of the views of 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 considered a range of documents, including leaders' self-evaluation and plans for improvement. The inspector checked records of attendance and behaviour. The inspector also observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and lunchtime and talked to them about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- The inspector considered the views of parents submitted via Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys for school staff. The inspector also met with parents at the end of the school day and gathered the views of pupils and staff on site through discussion.

Inspection team

Marilyn Mottram, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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