

Inspection of Whitefield Infant School and Nursery

Every Street, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 7HF

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 February 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils develop the behaviours and attitudes that they need to become thoughtful and responsible citizens of modern Britain. They learn to be respectful towards other people. Pupils say that at this school, 'You can be whomever you want. You can be different.'

The school thinks very carefully about how to support pupils' needs. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language, so the school makes sure that staff teach pupils expertly to use important words in English. Pupils become clear and confident in how they talk. Lessons are fascinating and memorable because of the school's high expectations, inspirational curriculum and teaching. Pupils achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils are happy and safe and have many friends at the school. Pupils' excellent behaviour, including in lessons, means that they have a joyful time. They benefit immensely from the school's meticulously thought-out programmes of extra experiences. For example, pupils take part in numerous educational trips, such as to a beach, farm, zoo, local parks and the theatre. Pupils gain lots of extra skills at after-school clubs, such as by playing board games, investigating mathematics and competing in sports. They learn valuable information about other people's lives from speaking often with visitors to the school.

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

At the heart of the school's success is its deep understanding of, and respect for, the needs of the local community. The school strives to do all it can to include and support each individual child and family. Leaders' and staff's first-rate expertise in early years and primary teaching enables them to provide pupils with a wonderful education.

The school's clear curricular thinking means that from Nursery to Year 2, pupils follow a well-crafted curriculum. The school identifies and supports the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) very well. It checks carefully that pupils remember essential subject knowledge. Staff act skilfully to close gaps in pupils' understanding. Pupils thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

Some published information does not reflect how extremely well pupils at the school learn phonics. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2024 was below average. These pupils were at the early stage of learning English, some have SEND and some were new to the school. They achieved very well because of the school's high expectations of all its pupils. The school ensures that teachers and teaching assistants are experts at teaching phonics. Staff make certain that pupils who struggle with reading have the extra, individual help that they need. Pupils become highly competent readers.

From the start of Nursery, the school makes certain that lots of well-chosen stories, rhymes and songs are the cornerstone of its curriculum. Children learn about the exploits of intriguing characters, such as a dangerous shark and a greedy caterpillar. They are enthralled by staff reading and re-reading traditional stories to them. For instance, they

relish listening to 'The Gingerbread Man' and 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. Pupils love stories and books. Staff do too.

Pupils at the school are self-disciplined, polite and kind. Beginning in the Nursery class and Reception Year, they learn these behaviours extremely well from staff. Pupils know the school's high expectations for their behaviour and meet these.

The school knows the reasons for pupils' absences. It reviews attendance information very effectively to spot issues. The school challenges and supports families where attendance is a concern. It works diligently with organisations, such as the local mosque, to remind parents and carers of the importance of full attendance at school. Pupils' attendance is improving well.

The school provides pupils with impressively well-designed opportunities for their personal growth. Numerous pupils are 'change leaders', 'digital leaders' or 'sports ambassadors'. Pupils learn to share their ideas and opinions and that their views matter. They contribute meaningfully to the school's work. The school is incredibly successful at teaching important values, such as respect, kindness and gratitude, to pupils. Pupils act on these values and can explain their meaning.

The school achieves the absolute best for its pupils. Over more than a decade, it has maintained an exemplary standard of education. Inspirational leaders ensure that staff have the wealth of expertise that they need to teach the curriculum. The school makes deft use of educational research and the advice of outside experts to refine its work. Staff are deeply happy in their jobs. Governors contribute exceptionally well to the overall vision and improvement of the school.

Pupils take immense pride in their writing, drawing and model-making. The school sets out examples of pupils' work beautifully in classrooms, corridors and shared areas. These displays show the considerable care and attention that leaders and staff give to making the school a wonderful place to be.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	119179
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10337657
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	333
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stephen Wilkinson
Headteacher	Erica Mason
Website	www.whitefield-inf.lancs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 October 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.
- Since the last inspection, the school has moved into new premises.
- Half of the staff are new to the school since the previous inspection.

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 and/or sixth form 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 completed deep dives in these subjects: design and technology, early reading, geography, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors made visits to lessons. The lead inspector listened to some pupils from Years 1 and 2 reading to staff.
- Inspectors also considered information about some other subjects and reviewed examples of pupils' writing from early years and key stage 1.
- Inspectors spoke with the school about behaviour and attendance, early years, special educational needs and its provision for pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, including pupils with SEND. Inspectors also spoke with pupils as they moved around the school. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey to consider.
- Inspectors spoke with some parents and considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors considered the findings of the school's own surveys of parental views.
- Inspectors spoke with teachers and teaching assistants about their work at the school. The inspectors reviewed the responses from staff to Ofsted's survey.
- The lead inspector met with the governing body. Some governors joined this meeting by telephone.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and with the school improvement partner.
- 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.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rebecca Gough

Ofsted Inspector

Gillian Crompton

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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