

Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School

Address: Brixham Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG2 7RB

Unique reference number (URN): 136512

Inspection report: 2 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. They regularly visit lessons and work alongside staff to identify strengths and areas of refinement. Leaders typically act quickly when they spot areas that need improvement. The curriculum is broad and ambitious. It has been carefully adapted to ensure it is accessible for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders prioritise teaching pupils the most important knowledge and skills in early English and mathematics. They are working quickly to embed the consistency of this teaching across the school, but there is more to do. Leaders are already taking steps to strengthen handwriting and spelling across the curriculum. Typically, teachers make effective adaptations to teaching and resources to support pupils to learn these vital skills.

Leaders have ensured that teachers have the subject-specific expertise that they need to teach the curriculum effectively. For example, they have successfully trained staff to deliver the new phonics programme with confidence. This increasingly enables pupils to read fluently, supporting their learning across subjects.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in early years settle quickly, arriving happily each morning and responding well to the warm welcome from trusted staff. Staff establish routines and expectations from the outset. This helps children to feel safe and secure and to engage positively in their learning. The school works hard to establish positive relationships with parents and carers. Leaders ensure staff continue to develop their skills. This helps to improve the quality of learning experiences that children receive.

Leaders have developed a carefully sequenced curriculum based on their understanding of children's needs and starting points. This curriculum ensures that children acquire the essential knowledge they need. Reading is taught from the beginning using the school's new phonics approach. Children generally use their knowledge of phonics to read with increasing fluency. Books are carefully matched to the sounds that children know. Staff monitor children's progress closely to identify and address gaps promptly. Staff often engage children in high-quality interactions, stories and rhymes. These support the development of children's vocabulary and language. At times, opportunities are missed to increase the frequency of these interactions to further accelerate children's progress.

Children in the early years are confident and demonstrate a sense of belonging. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, as well as how to maintain good hygiene and healthy habits.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Pupils who require extra support are included fully in the life of the school. Staff have a strong understanding of pupils' needs, including possible barriers to learning and welfare. Leaders have put in place effective systems to identify and assess needs accurately. As a result, pupils who require additional help receive timely support and are fully included in lessons and the wider life of the school. The school's provision for special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures pupils can access a curriculum tailored to their individual needs. Pupils who are new to the country or who speak English as an additional language are supported effectively to settle quickly and take a full part in school life. The school's commitment to inclusion is reflected in the breadth and complexity of its provision, which supports pupils with a diverse range of needs through a well-established and ambitious model of practice.

Leaders engage effectively with the local community and external agencies to guide the support the school offers particular pupils. Staff implement targeted interventions to improve engagement and behaviour, which are having a positive impact. For example, alternative provision and the virtual school are used thoughtfully and skilfully. Leaders use additional funding effectively in order to support disadvantaged pupils and reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders take effective and prompt action to improve the standard of education that pupils receive. Decisions are made with pupils' best interests at the centre, including those who are disadvantaged or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Their strategic planning provides clear direction, with a strong focus on enhancing pupils' educational experience. Recent actions taken are beginning to have a positive impact in key areas, with improvements evident in both pupil attendance and curriculum delivery.

Leaders ensure that staff receive the professional development they require. Teachers near the start of their career benefit from effective support and guidance to strengthen their practice. In many areas, leaders have successfully improved staff expertise. For example, phonics training has secured a more consistent and coherent approach across the school.

Governors are visible and supportive and play an active role. They pose important questions and are confident when holding leaders to account. Governors provide the right balance of challenge and support.

Leaders' engagement with parents and carers is generally positive. They work hard to involve families by building partnerships with them. However, this is not consistently recognised by parents themselves.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed an appropriate personal development programme that is well matched to pupils' ages. It builds their knowledge and understanding over time. Pupils learn

to respect others and understand right from wrong. Assemblies teach fundamental British values such as democracy, tolerance and respect. These values are typically understood by pupils. Pupils talk about why some characteristics are protected by law and know that these groups need to be treated with respect.

The school meets its statutory requirements for relationships, sex and health education. Pupils know how to stay safe, including when online, near roads and by water. Pupils understand how to maintain a healthy lifestyle, including making informed choices about a balanced diet. Leaders tailor the curriculum to sensitively address the contextual risks they know pupils may face in the local area. For example, pupils develop their understanding of the impact of knife crime through talks from the police.

Leadership roles, such as school councillor or librarian, help build pupils' social skills and develop a sense of responsibility and teamwork. Extra-curricular activities, clubs and enrichment experiences provide pupils with varied opportunities to explore their interests in music, sport and art. Leaders monitor pupils' participation in this offer. Most pupils take part in these activities. Leaders remove barriers to access, for example ensuring that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have the opportunity to take part in clubs and attend trips. All pupils are encouraged to represent the school at a sporting or curriculum competition. This includes poetry, cross-country and team sports.

Pupils benefit from high-quality pastoral support, particularly those who are most vulnerable. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of the importance of care and belonging.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Over the past 3 years, the school's results in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have often been below the national average. The proportion of Year 1 pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check has similarly remained below national figures. Disadvantaged pupils' achievement has improved in recent years but remains lower compared with their peers.

Improvements to the school's curriculum and teaching are making a positive difference for current pupils. Younger pupils are developing their reading knowledge with increased confidence. Leaders have also prioritised the development of pupils' writing fluency, particularly in handwriting and spelling. Younger pupils develop increasingly secure literacy and mathematics skills. However, a significant minority of older pupils have gaps in their earlier knowledge. Pupils develop suitable knowledge and skills across a range of subjects. For example, they analyse historical events such as World War II with increasing understanding and apply artistic techniques with greater control.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Attendance is below national averages and not consistently improving over time. Although leaders' work has led to improvements, too many pupils continue to be persistently absent.

Leaders check attendance closely and analyse patterns accurately. They provide individual support for pupils who struggle to attend regularly. Leaders have developed a clear understanding of the factors affecting pupils' attendance. They are taking appropriate and well-intentioned action to address this. However, these actions have not yet secured sufficient improvement in attendance rates.

Behaviour is generally positive. Leaders' actions to improve behaviour and raise expectations have been successful. The number of suspensions has decreased significantly. Leaders have ensured that staff and pupils understand and remember the behaviour policy. This is supported by the school's behaviour curriculum and behaviour values of 'Responsible, Respectful, Ready'. Pupils, including children in the early years, respond well to these. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and respond well to established classroom routines. Social times are calm. Pupils play collaboratively. Pupils feel safe. Instances of bullying and any use of discriminatory language are dealt with well. Teachers apply sanctions and rewards consistently and fairly. They take into account the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' positive views reflect this.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School plays a crucial part in pupils' daily lives. Pupils value their friendships. They recognise the positive impact committed staff have on them. The school's values of 'Aspire, Believe, Achieve' underpin work to develop pupils' aspirations, confidence and independence and help prepare them for their next steps. Supportive relationships between staff and pupils reinforce these values. Pupils feel a collective sense of belonging. Staff support those who join part-way through a year or key stage to integrate quickly and confidently into school life. Pupils feel safe. Calm, nurturing spaces, for example the school's 'Bumblebees' setting, are welcoming and supportive.

Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum across all key stages and enjoy their learning. Staff have high expectations and pupils approach their learning with curiosity. Sometimes, pupils achieve well. However, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. When they encounter more demanding work, they lack some of the foundations that would help them engage successfully. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they should and results are below national outcomes.

The school's curriculum expands vocabulary for all pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils who face barriers to their learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, benefit from effective support that enables them to make secure progress.

Pupils who attend regularly benefit fully from the school's positive learning environment. However, some pupils' absences remain too frequent, limiting the potential benefits of the well-designed curriculum. Leaders and staff have developed high expectations of behaviour. Consequently, pupils behave well. Bullying is rare, but when concerns arise, staff act swiftly to provide the right support.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that they embed and sustain their actions to bring pupils' attendance at least in line with national averages.
 - Leaders should consistently embed improvement to the curriculum and teaching to ensure that pupils strengthen their foundational knowledge, making sure that any gaps are addressed and pupils achieve at least in line with national expectations over time.
 - In the early years, leaders should ensure that staff maximise opportunities for children's learning through consistently high-quality interactions across all areas of provision.
 - Leaders should continue to develop strong partnerships with parents and carers in support of the school's work.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Cathy Woodcock.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with governors, including the chair of governors, the headteacher, senior leaders and staff during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority and pupils, parents and carers.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This provision is for 32 pupils with autism and social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

The school runs an on-site nursery provision. Children can currently join the nursery from age 2.

Headteacher: Mr Nathan Butler-Broad

Lead inspector:

Martin Dyer, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Meena Walia, Ofsted Inspector

Fiona Henderson, Ofsted Inspector

Matthew Rixson, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

520

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

630

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

39.79%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

5.77%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

31.35%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	44%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	53%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	46%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	34%	60%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	58%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	64%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	65%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	47%	73%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	55%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	68%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	48%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	52%	71%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	58%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	65%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	61%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	51%	73%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	29%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	35%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	29%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	24%	44%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	48%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	52%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	57%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	38%	60%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	45%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	58%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	29%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	46%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	40%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	45%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	43%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	32%	59%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	29%	68%	-38 pp
2024/25 (final)	35%	69%	-34 pp
2023/24 (final)	29%	67%	-39 pp
2022/23 (final)	24%	66%	-42 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	48%	80%	-32 pp
2024/25 (final)	52%	81%	-29 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	80%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	38%	78%	-40 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	45%	78%	-33 pp
2024/25 (final)	58%	78%	-20 pp
2023/24 (final)	29%	78%	-49 pp
2022/23 (final)	46%	77%	-31 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	40%	80%	-40 pp
2024/25 (final)	45%	81%	-35 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	79%	-37 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	32%	79%	-47 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	6.9%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.7%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	10.0%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	21.9%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	26.3%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	39.8%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard 

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard 

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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