

Whittington Primary and Nursery School

Address: Common Lane, Whittington, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS14 9LG

Unique reference number (URN): 149421

Inspection report: 20 January 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.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils have high attendance. If a pupil's attendance dips below expectations, staff are quick to find out why. Where necessary, they work with families and other organisations to make sure that any barriers to regular attendance are removed.

Pupils respond very well to leaders' high expectations for their behaviour. They understand how agreed routines help to keep everyone safe and happy. Consequently, the school is a calm place to be. In class, pupils can get on with their learning. Outside, pupils get on with one another. Leaders are not complacent about this. A recent focus on outdoor play and learning, for example, has helped all pupils to engage cooperatively, so that everyone gets the best from breaktimes. Staff are excellent role models and apply the school's behaviour policy with consistency. Pupils, too, play their part in supporting and maintaining this very positive culture. This is because the school teaches them how to resolve conflict and to manage their feelings in constructive ways. As pupils move through the school, they help to set expectations for others to follow. If anyone struggles with this, then staff and pupils help them to improve. Incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are uncommon, but if they happen, staff deal with them promptly and effectively.

Early years

Strong standard ●

Children get off to a strong start to their education. Close communication with pre-school providers, parents and carers means that staff are informed about children's different needs, interests and aptitudes. This ensures that staff identify any additional needs early and put highly effective support in place. Furthermore, a warm welcome from staff and well-rehearsed routines support all children to settle in quickly. Consequently, they feel safe and secure at school.

The Nursery and Reception areas provide purposeful learning environments. The curriculum and teaching provide secure foundations in phonics, spoken language and number. Classrooms are well set up to support children's independence and promote talk and language development. Additionally, adults are skilled at initiating meaningful conversations. This supports children to develop their language and knowledge of the concepts that sit behind words. Adults' careful attention to children's needs means that no one is overlooked.

Communication with home is efficient and much appreciated by parents. Communication within the school is effective too. Early years and key stage 1 staff work well together to support a smooth move from the Reception Year into Year 1. Children, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are remarkably well prepared for their next stage of learning.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders and staff have high expectations of all pupils. They are quick to identify pupils' particular needs and take effective action to support them with learning and other aspects of school life. Highly trained staff implement a wide range of well-considered strategies.

Importantly, staff keep a close eye on how well extra support is working and fine tune it when necessary. They actively seek specialist advice and training, working effectively with other organisations, where necessary. In addition, staff find out what pupils and their parents and carers think. They use this information to help them to evaluate the impact of their work with individual pupils.

Support for pupils' emotional development is noteworthy. The support provided to service families, for instance, helps pupils who join the school at short notice to settle quickly and to feel at home. Pupils, too, support one another and are quick to help or offer a kind word.

Additional funding is used effectively to provide tailored support for disadvantaged pupils. These strategies are regularly reviewed and refined to ensure that all pupils are included and able to thrive. As a result of this inclusive approach, the school is highly effective at reducing potential barriers to learning or participation in school activities. For example, the school makes sure that all pupils have equal access to clubs, trips and pupil leadership roles. The school's careful tracking of pupils' achievements assures them of the positive impact of the school's offer for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

There is a wealth of opportunities for everyone at this school. The 'Whittington passport' sets out very clear expectations for the range of beyond the classroom experiences that all pupils should have. This coherent approach to enrichment and extra-curricular activities is a distinctive feature of the school. It has a marked impact on pupils' wellbeing, engagement and confidence. Pupils benefit from several residential trips, including one to France, and a raft of after-school clubs. Such activities help pupils to develop their interests, build independence and take responsibility. In addition, the wider curriculum includes many opportunities for pupils to build their knowledge of how different people live, both around the world and in modern Britain.

Leaders ensure that the personal, social, health and economic curriculum provides pupils with a secure knowledge of how to keep themselves safe and act responsibly. Furthermore, pupil leadership roles such as being school councillors and digital leaders give pupils a voice in shaping school policy and practice. Consistent messages in lessons and through daily interactions between staff and pupils serve to support a highly respectful culture. The impact is plain to see in pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes. They instinctively help one another and, if problems do arise, they try to find ways to make things better. Pupils' ability to manage relationships in safe, respectful ways means they make the most of school and are very well prepared for life beyond it. They have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and what safe, healthy relationships look like.

Staff have an excellent knowledge of pupils' needs. They use this knowledge to tailor both academic and emotional support carefully to pupils' different circumstances. This is highly effective and enables all pupils to thrive. Whatever their backgrounds or circumstances, this school gives pupils a clear sense of belonging.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Whatever their background or circumstances, pupils typically achieve well at this school. Over time, this has been reflected in consistently above-average outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. This success is also apparent in the quality of pupils' current work in these subjects. This is the result of an informed and effective focus on developing pupils' skills in these areas. Early attention to posture, handwriting and spelling means that pupils secure helpful habits from the start. It also means that pupils are well equipped to tackle ambitious work in key stage 2.

Pupils' positive achievement in English can also be seen in the quality of their reading and writing across the curriculum. However, subject-specific achievement in other subjects varies. Leaders know that more careful attention to progression and practice in some subjects would support pupils to be even better prepared for later learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The school provides an effective curriculum, which is supported by regular staff training. From the start, staff prioritise the teaching of the most important key knowledge that pupils need to learn so that they are able to read, write and understand numbers. Staff are alert to anyone who falls behind and act quickly to help them catch up. In many subjects, teachers regularly check what pupils know. They do this well and make sure new learning builds securely on what pupils already understand. Where necessary, appropriate adaptations are made to meet pupils' needs. This organised and efficient approach means that pupils' competency with reading, writing and mathematics builds securely over time. Furthermore, the school's current focus on oracy is having a positive impact on pupils' speaking, listening and confidence. Indeed, during this inspection, it was evident that pupils enjoy talking and are encouraged to share their views in the classroom. They are articulate and talkative.

Beyond English and mathematics, the school provides a broad and inclusive curriculum, which pupils enjoy. However, the quality of pupils' learning in other subjects varies. In physical education and the arts, for example, learning is well ordered. This supports pupils' learning effectively. In some other subjects, such as humanities, there is scope to strengthen the curriculum and teaching further.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

This is a well-led school where teamwork, integrity and professionalism shine out. School leaders are very positive role models. They bring high expectations to all aspects of their work. They have an accurate view of the school's performance and set appropriate priorities for future development. They share these across the whole school community so that everyone understands what they are working towards. Furthermore, leaders actively seek feedback from staff, parents and carers. Leaders do much to ensure that all feel valued and involved. In all that they do, leaders put pupils' best interests first.

Community links are strong, as is communication with parents. Indeed, parents express very positive views about their school and the quality of leadership, education and care provided. Staff, too, report high levels of satisfaction at work and value the many ways that leaders support them. Leaders are mindful of staff welfare and workload and support them with regular training so they can do their jobs well. In addition, staff benefit from opportunities to share practice and expertise with other schools. Looking ahead, leaders plan additional training for subject leaders in order to further strengthen the impact of their work.

Trust leaders have established and maintain effective systems for checking on and supporting the school's work. They ensure all statutory duties are met. They work well with local governors to make sure all understand their roles and responsibilities.

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

Being a pupil at this school is a positive, supportive and enjoyable experience. Clear routines and consistent expectations mean that the school is a calm, caring, safe place where everyone is well looked after. This means that everyone can focus on their learning with confidence. Pupils behave very well. They are polite, considerate and kind. Pupils understand the importance of helping others and are quick to offer support or a friendly word. Staff teach pupils how to understand and manage their emotions. This helps them to resolve disagreements sensibly, which helps to maintain a peaceful and happy atmosphere. Bullying is rare, but pupils know that adults will deal with it promptly and effectively if it does happen. Pupils are rightly confident that any problems will be taken seriously.

Pupils enjoy school. This shows in their high attendance and highly positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are committed and curious learners. They benefit from lessons that are well organised and engaging. A notable feature is the way staff encourage pupils to talk, and to share and discuss ideas. This builds pupils' confidence and social skills. An extensive range of clubs, trips, leadership opportunities and enrichment activities add additional interest and excitement to school life. Leaders organise these so that everyone can be included.

Pupils typically achieve well because of the high expectations set for them and the timely support that they receive. Children in the early years get off to a flying start. They are exceptionally well prepared for the demands of Year 1. Achievement in English and mathematics, for example, is consistently above national averages at the end of key stage 2. Staff monitor pupils' progress closely and help them overcome any difficulties. This ensures that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well prepared for secondary school.

Parents and carers speak positively about the school. Many of their responses to Ofsted's parent survey praised the quality of education, care and leadership provided. Inspection evidence supports their views.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to strengthen subject leadership in some subjects through evidence-informed training and support.
 - Leaders should refine aspects of the curriculum in some foundation subjects so that pupils make even better progress across the whole curriculum.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the John Taylor multi-academy 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), Mike Donoghue OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Colin Hopkins MBE.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

During the inspection, inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders, staff, pupils and parents. The lead inspector met with the CEO, the chair of trustees, the chair of the local governing body and the trust's governance professional.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Nichola Leeson

Lead inspector:

Martin Pye, Ofsted Inspector

Team inspectors:

Hayley Clarke, Ofsted Inspector

Darryl Asbury, 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 20 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

323

Close to 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

336

Close to 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)

4.65%

Well below 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

2.79%

Close to 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

6.50%

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well below 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		61%	
2024/25 (revised)	83%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	84%	61%	Above
2022/23		60%	

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		74%	
2024/25 (revised)	87%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	95%	74%	Above
2022/23		73%	

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		72%	
2024/25 (revised)	87%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	88%	72%	Above
2022/23		71%	

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		73%	
2024/25 (revised)	87%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	91%	73%	Above
2022/23		73%	

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		46%	
2024/25 (revised)	67%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	46%	Above
2022/23		44%	

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		62%	

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	83%	62%	Above
2022/23		60%	

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		59%	
2024/25 (revised)	67%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	83%	58%	Above
2022/23		58%	

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		60%	
2024/25 (revised)	67%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	83%	59%	Above
2022/23		59%	

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		68%	
2024/25 (revised)	67%	69%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	83%	67%	16 pp
2022/23		66%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	83%	80%	4 pp
2022/23		78%	

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		78%	
2024/25 (revised)	67%	78%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	83%	78%	6 pp
2022/23		77%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	83%	79%	4 pp
2022/23		79%	

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 (2 term)	4.1%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.8%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.7%	5.9%	Below

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 (2 term)	6.8%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.9%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	7.2%	16.2%	Below

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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