

Inspection of a good school: Whitleigh Community Primary School

Lancaster Gardens, Whitleigh, Plymouth, Devon PL5 4AA

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 December 2022

Outcome

Whitleigh Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are kind, caring and friendly. They are proud of their school. Leaders live up to their promise of making sure that children are 'happy, safe and learning'. They regularly host inspirational visitors to develop pupils' aspirations. Pupils thrive on these opportunities. For example, they delight in retelling how they met the tallest basketball player in the UK.

Pupils learn how to demonstrate the school's core values of respect, responsibility and resilience. There are clear and consistent routines and expectations for pupils' behaviour. As a result, the school is calm and orderly.

Pupils feel safe. They are grateful for how adults help them to deal with any worries they may have. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens but that when it does, it is dealt with quickly by teachers. Pupils demonstrate utmost respect when listening and responding to others.

The school is at the heart of the community. All are valued and welcomed into this vibrant school. Leaders say, 'If you can dream it, you can be it.' They help pupils understand both their rights and responsibilities. For example, pupils have campaigned for more local NHS dentists in their area and shared their views with the local MP.

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

Leaders place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' language and communication skills. This starts in the early years, where teachers interact with children in a purposeful way to develop their speech and language. In addition, teachers make sure that pupils learn technical vocabulary in a range of subjects. As a result, pupils speak confidently. When they talk about their learning, pupils use the technical vocabulary that they have learned in lessons.

Learning to read is a priority. In recent months, all staff have refreshed their knowledge and received up-to-date training on teaching children to read. Staff quickly spot those

who need help and provide appropriate extra practice. The letters and sounds in reading books match the phonics that pupils are taught. This helps pupils to develop their reading speed and accuracy well. All staff encourage a love of reading. Pupils enjoy the books read to them by teachers and are eager to share the stories they read.

Leaders have ensured that the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are consistently well met. Leaders guide staff well so that they have an accurate understanding of the individual needs of pupils. Pupils get the support they need.

The school's engaging curriculum captures pupils' interests and imagination. In most subjects, leaders ensure that important knowledge is broken into small logical steps. Subject specialists help teachers to teach their subjects well so that pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding. However, in some subjects, the planning of important knowledge is not precise enough. In these subjects, pupils do not know and remember more over time.

The curriculum for pupils' personal and social development is broad-ranging. Leaders ensure that pupils develop life skills. The curriculum is enriched by outdoor learning and a variety of clubs. These opportunities help pupils to develop sporting and artistic talents. Pupils gain a strong understanding of respect, tolerance and the principles of equality and diversity. The school's pastoral team provides care and support for pupils, including for their emotional health and well-being.

Staff share leaders' high ambitions for all pupils and are dedicated to supporting pupils and their families. They are overwhelmingly positive about the support the leadership team provide. Staff feel valued and are grateful for the consideration that leaders give to their workload and well-being.

Governors are committed to the school and know the community well. They share leaders' ambitions. They have not shied away from difficult decisions. They work in partnership with education leaders within and beyond the school to ensure that pupils receive a good education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a culture of 'it could happen here'. Adults in school have up-to-date training. Leaders complete appropriate checks before staff and volunteers begin working at the school. Any concerns are followed up on in a timely manner. Governors are methodical in their challenge to leaders to make sure that pupils are free from harm.

Leaders work well with external agencies to seek advice and protect pupils and families in need.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe. This includes online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects within the wider curriculum, the most important content that pupils need to learn is not explicit enough. It is unclear what pupils should know and by when. Leaders need to ensure that staff prioritise essential knowledge so all pupils have the building blocks for future learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 in January 2017.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	132215
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10212395
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	392
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Bale
Headteacher	Gavin Summerfield
Website	www.whitleigh-pri.plymouth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses two registered alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

- 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 met with the headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, staff, pupils and five members of the governing body. She also conducted a telephone call with a local authority representative and a local provider of alternative provision.
- The inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a known adult.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also visited lessons and talked to staff and pupils about physical education.

- The inspector observed pupils during breaktime and lunchtime and spoke with pupils about personal development.
- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. She also spoke to pupils, staff and governors about safeguarding practices.
- The inspector also considered the 37 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the 38 free-text responses. She also gained the views of parents on the morning of the second day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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