

Whitefield Primary School

Stockholm Way, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 3SS

Inspection dates	24–25 February 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has improved a great deal since the last inspection and is well placed to develop further. The headteacher has high expectations and brings much drive and enthusiasm to her role. The senior leadership team, other leaders and the governing body have supported her very well in improving teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The school's records of pupils' achievement, work in pupils' books and lessons show that the progress of current pupils is good in reading, writing, mathematics and in a range of other subjects. The school is working effectively to fill past gaps in pupils' learning.
- As a result of good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes, children are now making good progress in the early years. This is leading to clear improvement in the proportion of children who are set to reach a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and teaching and learning are good. The school has a clear system for assessing pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. Leaders make very good use of the information this provides to identify pupils who need extra help and to drive school improvement.
- The Lantern Behaviour Provision makes outstanding provision for pupils with behavioural, social, emotional and mental health difficulties. It meets with a high level of success in returning pupils to their mainstream schools and enables them to make exceptional progress.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They enjoy learning and respond well to the opportunities the school provides. Very good pastoral support, including that provided by the family workers, does much to promote pupils' personal development and welfare.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The early years' learning environment is not yet as stimulating as it could be, and parents are not fully involved in their children's learning and assessment.
- The school has not fully developed an assessment system for non-core subjects.
- Occasionally, teachers do not challenge the most-able pupils enough or provide as many opportunities as they could for pupils to apply their mathematical skills. Important spelling mistakes sometimes go uncorrected and teachers do not always insist that pupils present their work neatly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and increase the proportion of pupils who make better than expected progress by:
 - providing children in the early years provision with an indoor and outdoor environment that provides further opportunities for learning
 - increasing the involvement of parents in their children's assessment when they join the early years provision and involving them more closely in their children's learning so that they are more aware of the importance of their role in this
 - ensuring that teachers throughout the school always challenge the thinking of the most-able pupils and move them on without delay to deeper work when they have grasped a new concept
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and skills to gain a greater level of mastery in mathematics
 - placing greater emphasis on the way pupils present their written work, and ensuring that all teachers point out important spelling mistakes and check that pupils do not repeat mistakes when doing corrections
 - fully developing a coherent system for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in non-core subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school and she has been successful in communicating high expectations to the staff and pupils alike. Members of the senior leadership team and others with key management responsibilities are clear about their roles, and there is a determined drive for further improvement.
- The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate. Leaders identify the right priorities for development and they work to bring about continuous improvement in teaching, learning and pupils' outcomes. They have put rigorous systems in place which now underpin all aspects of the school's work, and these have been key to improvements in teaching.
- Senior leaders are rigorous in monitoring teachers' work so that weaknesses are tackled and staff who need support receive regular coaching. Staff have had good opportunities to develop their skills through training and through observing good practice at Chantry Primary Academy, where the national leader of education who has been supporting Whitefield is headteacher.
- The school has set ambitious targets for the progress it expects pupils to make. It has thorough systems for tracking their progress, and for identifying where individuals and groups need extra help or where aspects of provision need to be improved.
- Leaders make very good use of information about pupils' progress to pinpoint where further improvement could be made and to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities. They have established an environment in which pupils can flourish and they tackle any form of harassment or discrimination well by promoting good relationships throughout the school.
- Leaders with responsibility for subjects, including English and mathematics, make a good contribution to school improvement. The early years provision is now led effectively and the leadership of the Lantern Behaviour Provision is exceptionally good. The school is at an early stage in developing its outreach provision, which will involve staff in providing preventative behaviour support to other schools, but it is clear that the school has much to give in this area.
- The school has received highly focused support from the local authority and from a national leader of education (NLE). The local authority supports and challenges the school through regular reviews of the impact of its work on pupils' learning and development. Close working with the NLE and her deputy has done much to build the school's capacity for improvement and supported new leaders in developing their expertise.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of different pupils. It covers a wide range of subjects and topics, with a strong emphasis on developing pupils' communication, language, literacy and numeracy skills. The planning of the curriculum around books adds cohesion, and this, together with a good range of clubs, special events and opportunities to take part in the Forest Schools initiative, motivates pupils. The interesting links between subjects were evident in pupils' writing in Key Stage 1 about the zoo and in mathematics, where work on shape was linked to work on the Chinese New Year.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, and values are widely promoted throughout the school through displays in corridors and in every classroom.
- The school makes good use of the pupil premium funding to narrow the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally. It uses the funding in a variety of ways as well as to provide support in small groups and one-to-one interventions to ensure that the gaps are narrowing between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils.
- Leaders use primary sports funding well to promote pupils' physical development and well-being. There has been a significant increase in after-school clubs in sports since the last inspection and in pupils' participation in physical activities, including competitions with other schools. Teachers have worked alongside the physical education apprentices, who have led various clubs, in order to develop their own teaching skills.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body has been strengthened since the last inspection and governors now bring greater expertise to their role. The governing body holds leaders closely to account and governors visit the school regularly to check on how much improvement has been made. Governors' good understanding of data and of the progress of different groups of pupils means that they are well informed about the school's effectiveness and about what could still be improved.

- Governors have an accurate view about the quality of teaching and a good understanding of the impact it has on pupils’ learning. They ensure that the school has rigorous arrangements for managing teachers’ performance so that good teaching is recognised and weaknesses are tackled.
- Governors oversee the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and British values effectively, and pay careful attention to pupils’ health and safety. They ensure that safeguarding meets requirements and that policies and procedures are up to date.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school works well with parents and other agencies to establish a safe culture for pupils. Robust procedures are in place and staff are well trained in safeguarding and child protection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has greatly improved since the last inspection, when it was found to require improvement. The school’s own records of teaching, the work in pupils’ books and the rapid increase in their rate of progress show that teaching and learning are now good.
- Teachers manage pupils’ behaviour well and have established a very positive atmosphere for learning. Classrooms and corridors are made attractive with numerous displays of pupils’ work and they often include helpful information to extend their learning.
- Lessons are consistently well planned across the different classes in each year group, and teachers nearly always draw on what they know about pupils’ previous learning to set work that is at the right level of difficulty. They share information with pupils about what they are meant to learn and make sure that they know what to do to succeed.
- At the time of the last inspection, teachers’ questioning was identified as an area for improvement. The school has done a great deal of work to develop the way teachers question pupils to probe and deepen their thinking. There were many examples during the inspection of teachers asking questions that stimulated thinking and promoted discussion, resulting in pupils giving detailed explanations about their work.
- Teaching is of high quality in the Lantern Behaviour Provision. Teachers structure their lessons very carefully and set high expectations for pupils’ work and behaviour. Teachers and teaching assistants ask probing questions and keep very detailed notes of pupils’ academic and personal progress.
- In the rest of the school, teachers and teaching assistants provide good support for pupils who have special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils, those who need to catch up quickly and pupils learning English as an additional language. Teaching assistants explain work well to the pupils they work with and teachers make sure that they are clear about their role in pupils’ learning.
- The teaching of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics is good. In lessons and pupils’ books, many examples were seen of teachers setting interesting and challenging work. In English, pupils have good opportunities to explore a variety of texts and to write for a range of purposes. In addition, teachers provide them with stimulating tasks to develop and consolidate their literacy skills in a number of other subjects.
- The school is working to increase the opportunities pupils have to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills and there was particularly good evidence of this in lessons in Year 6. Pupils’ books show that teachers in other classes ask some good, open-ended questions in mathematics but that at times, they do not give pupils work that enables them to gain a greater level of mastery in mathematics through applying their skills.
- There has been careful and detailed planning to make sure pupils systematically develop their skills in non-core subjects throughout the school. Pupils’ topic books show how well teachers promote their learning, often through imaginative work based on books the class has studied. Furthermore, tasks set for homework build effectively on the work pupils have done in class and make a good contribution to their learning.
- The school has devised a well-conceived assessment policy and teachers’ assessment of pupils’ work is accurate in reading, writing and mathematics. There are good procedures for comparing different teachers’ assessment judgements within school and for comparing them with those in other schools. In most respects, teachers follow the marking policy appropriately and provide good advice to pupils about what they have done well and how they could improve. Teachers do not all correct important spellings, including key subject vocabulary, however, or always check that pupils have not repeated their original mistakes when doing their spelling corrections.

- There is some variation in teachers' expectations about how well pupils present their work. Pupils' handwriting and the general presentation of their work are very neat in some classes but at times, teachers do not remark on work that is not presented as well as it should be.
- The school has developed a rigorous system for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in science and is in the process of developing an assessment system for non-core subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils have a clear awareness about what they need to do to be successful learners. They know, for instance, that it is important to pay attention and listen carefully, and to work hard and concentrate in lessons. Throughout the school, pupils show that they are confident to talk to one another and respect each other's views and contributions.
- Teachers encourage pupils to be reflective and to think about their learning, and the deepening of teachers' questioning is providing pupils with more opportunities to express their ideas. They are increasingly able to explain their thinking.
- Pupils are very positive about how the school supports their personal development through the values system. A group of pupils interviewed were able to explain what qualities such as 'reliability' mean and how this leads to trust. They say that the emphasis on personal values helps them to feel secure and it encourages them to be highly respectful of each other. Older pupils readily guide and support younger ones.
- Pastoral support is a clear strength of the school, including that provided by the family workers, the nurture group and close liaison with other agencies. Together with a curriculum that promotes pupils' personal development well, this goes a long way in promoting pupils' emotional and physical well-being.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and they know the importance of taking precautions to protect themselves when using the internet. They say that there has been some bullying in the past but that there is not very much now. They feel safe in school and are confident that staff will deal with any concerns they may have.
- Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and gain a clear understanding of British values. They are knowledgeable about the law and how the values of respect and responsibility help them understand how to make the right choices to avoid hurting others. Pupils interviewed spoke sensitively about differences between and the importance of respecting those from different religions and cultural backgrounds.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is calm and orderly, and pupils' conduct is good in lessons, around the school and in the playground. Pupils readily follow teachers' instructions and disruption in lessons is rare.
- The school's systems for managing pupils' behaviour have been strengthened since the last inspection and pupils say that behaviour has improved. The school's own recent survey of parents' views shows that they are positive about how the school has dealt with any issues around behaviour. Pupils respect the reward system and want to do well.
- In the Lantern Behaviour Provision, the outstanding improvement pupils make in their behaviour enables a high proportion to return successfully to mainstream school, often after only a relatively short time at Whitefield. During the inspection, pupils in the unit listened carefully to the staff and to one another and their very positive behaviour made a strong contribution to their learning.
- The school is rigorous in the way it tackles persistent absence, so that it is being steadily reduced. As a result, the attendance rate has improved since the last inspection and it is now broadly average.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for pupils are good because the school is working successfully to raise standards. Information from the tracking of pupils' progress, and work in their books and in lessons show that current pupils are making rapid progress and filling past gaps in their learning not only in English and mathematics but in a range of subjects. The school is ensuring that pupils are now being well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils in the Lantern Behaviour Provision make exceptional progress and the school is highly effective in enabling pupils to return to mainstream classes at Whitefield or to their home schools. In an English lesson during the inspection, pupils in the unit read fluently and were able to speak in depth about the information leaflets they had been asked to evaluate. Their books showed that they have produced a substantial amount of work in English and mathematics, quickly developing a range of skills.
- From starting points that are low on entry to the early years provision, especially for boys, children in the Nursery and Reception Years are now making good progress. The proportion of children who reached a good level of development at the end of early years improved significantly in 2015, showing that children had made at least the expected amount of progress. Further improvement is evident in the work that children are currently producing and far more children are working at least in line with the skills typically found for their age across the areas of learning.
- The introduction of improved methods for teaching reading, writing and phonics (the sounds that letters represent) has brought considerable improvements in phonics and reading and provided a focus for writing in the Reception Year and Key Stage 1. The school's results in the Year 1 screening of pupils' knowledge of phonics improved in 2015 and though still below average at that time, inspection findings indicate that current pupils are working above expectations for their age.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were significantly below average in 2014 and 2015 in reading, writing and mathematics. However, comparisons between these pupils' attainment at the end of the Reception Year, when their attainment was very low, and at the end of Year 2 show that most pupils made at least expected progress and some made good progress during their time in Key Stage 1. For pupils currently in Key Stage 1, the school is successfully tackling a legacy of underachievement established when they were in the early years provision. It is successfully filling gaps in pupils' learning so that outcomes are rapidly improving in mathematics and especially in reading and writing.
- The school's results at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2015 showed clear improvement on the very low standards in 2013 and 2014. Attainment in 2015 was broadly average in reading and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Though attainment was below average in mathematics and writing in 2015, it was an improvement on the low standards evident in the two previous years. The value that the school added to pupils' learning in 2015 was the best it has been since the last inspection.
- Data show that the rate of current pupils' progress is rapidly improving in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2. The school has set ambitious targets for all pupils, and half-termly checks on the progress of different groups show that those who did less well last year are now making faster progress. For example, girls are now making more progress than boys in mathematics as a result of the extra support the school has put in place for them.
- While a gap remained in 2015 between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their classmates and more particularly between their attainment and that of all pupils nationally, especially in writing, published data show that the school has been gradually closing the gap between these pupils and their peers since the last inspection. Disadvantaged pupils are currently making good progress in response to carefully targeted support.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability are making good progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and those of minority ethnic heritage make similar progress to their classmates. At times, groups such as pupils of Bangladeshi origin in 2015, outperform their peers. The school provides good support to pupils who need to catch up quickly and leaders are focusing closely on pupils who did less well than expected at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2015 in order to raise their achievement.
- Pupils' books show that the most-able pupils are generally making at least the expected amount of progress, but within individual lessons, teachers do not always challenge them as well as they could. At times, they do not have the opportunity to move on quickly to deeper work once they have grasped a new concept and when this happens, it slows their learning.

Early years provision

is good

- There has been a complete change of teaching staff this year in the Nursery and Reception classes and a new leader took up post in September 2015. These changes have contributed to an overall improvement in teaching, leadership and the quality of provision, all of which are now good.
- In 2013 and 2014, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development was well below the national average and boys in particular underperformed. Outcomes at the end of the Reception Year were closer to those nationally in 2015, indicating that children had made at least the expected amount of progress from very low starting points, though the proportion of children reaching a good level of development remained below average.
- As a result of good teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception classes this year and the introduction of improved tracking of children's development, the progress of current children is good. Children in the Reception Year are now being prepared well for when they move up to Year 1.
- The staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and promote their communication and language development well. Teachers carefully target children who need extra help in order to raise achievement and the school is making good use of additional funding to narrow the gaps for disadvantaged children.
- The introduction of themes that appeal particularly to boys, such as superheroes, is helping to promote their interest in writing; during the inspection, children were using clipboards in the outside area because they were being 'reporters'. The staff provide well for children with special educational needs or disability and work closely with external agencies to provide specialist support where necessary.
- Children behave well in the Nursery and Reception classes. In lessons visited, they listened well and paid careful attention when the teacher was reading a story and when they watched a video about spiders. Children make good progress in their personal development and the school pays careful attention to their welfare, making sure that they are kept safe.
- The school has worked closely with the local authority to improve aspects of provision and is aware that more work needs to be done to develop the learning environment. The very small outdoor area used by Nursery children included a good range of learning activities during the inspection but the spacious outdoor area used by Reception children is relatively undeveloped. The indoor environment throughout the early years provision is less stimulating than it could be and does not, in a range of subjects, provide the excitement or depth of learning opportunities found in the best early years settings.
- The school has already introduced some improvements to the way it works in partnership with parents. It has introduced more of an open-door policy, so that parents can talk to staff more easily about their children's learning. The staff send tasks home each week for children to do with their parents and they provide some information about other things that they could do to support learning at home. Parents are not as fully involved as they could be, however, in the assessment of their children when they join the school and they do not contribute to their learning journals.

School details

Unique reference number	109576
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10001897

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	400
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Simpson
Headteacher	Jamie Pardon
Telephone number	01582 596108
Website	www.whitefieldprimary.com
Email address	admin@whitefield.primaryluton.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 December 2013

Information about this school

- Whitefield is larger than most primary schools.
- Since the last inspection, a six-place, specially resourced unit has opened on the school site, known as the Lantern Behaviour Provision. The unit caters for pupils with behavioural, social, emotional and mental health needs who are on roll at Whitefield or who come from other local primary schools. The provision is led and managed by the school and serves pupils in Years 1 to 6.
- In the main school, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability is above average.
- A high proportion of the pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- Soon after the last inspection, the previous headteacher resigned and the newly appointed deputy took over as acting headteacher. Her headship was made permanent in September 2014. A new deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher took up post in January 2015. As well as the establishment of a new senior leadership team, there has been a high turnover of teaching staff and only a few teachers remain who were in post at the time of the last inspection. There have also been changes in the membership and leadership of the governing body.
- The school has received the support of a national leader of education from Chantry Primary Academy.
- Since the last inspection, the school has received a monitoring visit by Ofsted to determine how much progress it was making in meeting its areas of improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a wide variety of lessons, nearly all jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- They heard pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work in different subjects and across all year groups, including in the Lantern Behaviour Provision.
- Inspectors looked at data and the school's tracking information to determine the progress pupils are making across the school and in early years provision.
- There were too few responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, for these to be taken into account. However, inspectors considered the results of a parental survey conducted recently by the school and some written comments received from parents during the inspection. They also held informal discussions with a few parents when they brought their children to school. Inspectors looked at the responses of staff and pupils in their completed questionnaires.
- Inspectors held meetings with school leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and with two groups of pupils.
- They examined a range of documentation including: safeguarding policies and procedures; records of behaviour and attendance; minutes of governing body meetings and records of their visits to school; the school improvement plan; and the school's self-evaluation of its work.

Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Dominic Carver	Ofsted Inspector
Debbie Rogan	Ofsted Inspector

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