

Whittlefield Primary School

Tabor Street, Burnley, Lancashire BB12 0HL

Inspection dates

7–8 February 2017

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The quality of education in the school is good and improving because of the skilled work of school leaders and the support and assistance given by governors.
- The new headteacher has set out a clear and ambitious vision for the school. Much of what the school does has been revised and strengthened under her thoughtful, knowledgeable leadership. Staff have a good understanding of what they do well and the next steps for improving the school.
- Pupils' achievement across the school is good because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is strong. Nevertheless, leaders recognise that teachers need to challenge pupils, particularly the most able, to achieve even more in their work.
- Senior leaders are skilful at helping staff to develop their skills and work well as a team. However, middle leaders do not check the quality of teaching for the foundation subjects in enough depth to have a comprehensive overview of the quality of their subject.
- The school is good at providing support for individual pupils and families who are facing significant challenges in their lives. There is great focus on helping all pupils to develop the skills and confidence necessary to succeed. The culture of safeguarding pupils is very positive throughout the school.
- Teachers' high expectations make sure pupils behave and learn successfully. Pupils enjoy their learning across subjects and in extra activities. They are confident in their own abilities and keen to learn more.
- Teachers lead the provision for children in Nursery and Reception ably. Teaching by the team of teachers and teaching assistants is good and improving. Children in the early years are becoming confident, skilled learners. They behave themselves and achieve well because of exciting teaching and the skilled extra help they receive. The teaching of mathematics and writing for three- to five-year-olds is a particular strength.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve checks on the quality of teaching in the foundation subjects so middle leaders have a sharp understanding of how to improve these aspects of the school.
- Strengthen the amount of challenge in activities so more pupils, particularly the most able, achieve high standards by the end of key stages 1 and 2.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher is working skilfully to renew and refresh the quality of the school. Changes are planned and implemented carefully with the full support of governors and advice from the local authority. Many pupils and parents comment positively about the impact of the wide-ranging improvements to the school. For example, they value the efforts of the school to live by the new motto of 'Dream, believe, achieve'. They welcome the improvements in teaching and pupils' progress. Parents like the new opportunities to attend the weekly assemblies to celebrate with their children.
- Several staff and leaders are newly appointed, bringing fresh ideas to help the school develop. Leaders make sure that staff consider the content and organisation of teaching carefully. For example, teachers make good use of visits, visitors and stories in planned activities. This helps pupils and staff to be enthusiastic and inspired by learning.
- Pupils develop their learning through extra clubs provided by the school, for example very successfully through the exciting science club.
- Much thought is given to helping pupils to understand important values such as democracy and respect. Pupils are being given increasingly valuable and beneficial opportunities to meet pupils from schools very different from their own. They are developing a good understanding of the main religions found in modern Britain, including Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.
- The combined impact of the many changes in the school is that the quality of education for pupils is good. Senior leaders have a clear and united view of how the school will now move even further forward. The vision of what can be achieved remains clear, well considered and implemented with steady care. Staff have high morale and are fully behind the improvements being made.
- The school makes close links with other local schools to learn from, and with, other professionals. Staff access a wide range of training, and together with regular support from leaders, this has enabled the quality of teaching to be consistently good. Leaders help staff from Nursery to Year 6 to make a positive difference to the quality of learning for pupils.
- Leaders and governors make careful decisions about the use of the pupil premium, physical education and sports funding and money for special educational needs and/or disabilities. Expenditure is matched closely to agreed school improvement priorities and combined carefully with other funding wherever possible to maximise the benefits to pupils, families and staff.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well coordinated by leaders.
- Several middle leaders in the school are new to their roles. They check staff records and the quality of pupils' work in the foundation subjects regularly but they do not have a detailed knowledge of the quality of teaching.

- Leaders are not complacent about the rapidly improving picture of pupils' achievement in the school. They have identified correctly that the quality of tasks set for pupils does not always challenge pupils enough, particularly the most able pupils and the most able disadvantaged pupils.

Governance of the school

- Members of the governing body are passionate about their roles and strongly committed to helping the school improve. They are thrilled with the improvements that the new headteacher has brought about and they are unafraid to challenge her about what more can be achieved. They keenly visit the school and speak to parents, pupils and staff because they want to check what they read and are told about the quality of education provided. They take their responsibilities seriously, review their own skills carefully and have clear plans in place to strengthen their own work.
- Governors keep school finances under close scrutiny and they make sure expenditure is planned well. They are committed to strengthening the work of the school to support pupils and families, so for example they allocate extra funding to staffing for pastoral help.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The care and protection of pupils is well developed and a prime focus of everyday life in the school. Under the leadership of the new headteacher existing adequate arrangements to keep pupils safe and protected have been revised and strengthened wherever possible.
- Leaders and governors develop positive ways of working where all staff are not only vigilant in spotting possible issues in the lives of pupils and their families but support is made available. Dedicated, well-trained staff coordinate and provide assistance to pupils and families who are finding life difficult.
- Information about a wide range of pupil welfare matters is recorded carefully by staff, reviewed thoroughly and acted on by senior leaders. Information is shared promptly with outside agencies such as the police and social services whenever necessary. Support for pupils who have a multi-agency plan in place is first rate and makes a very positive difference to the lives of pupils and those of their families.
- Staff learn regularly about child protection. Updates they receive about safeguarding include reminders about key issues, such as preventing pupils from being exposed to radicalised views of modern Britain. Nevertheless, during the inspection, a minor administrative error was identified in records kept of updates for staff about safeguarding. This was addressed immediately and the many well-established safeguarding practices in place show this issue does not indicate wider weaknesses.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Across the school, much attention is given to celebrating pupils' work in attractive displays about their learning in different subjects. Leaders have made sure that each classroom is a welcoming, cared-for environment. Thoughtful displays of information are set out intentionally to support pupils in their studies.
- Where teaching is strongest, pupils are given many opportunities to think, collaborate and investigate. For example, pupils in a key stage 2 science activity experimented with glasses of water to create sounds of different pitch and learned how to predict and test their ideas accurately. Well-planned, thoughtful questions from the teacher extended pupils' thinking, including for the most able disadvantaged pupils. In a key stage 1 English activity for example, pupils were learning to use words such as 'because', 'also' and 'then' in their writing. They were greatly enthused by the activity and responded well. The teacher inspired them to think how to use such vocabulary in writing about a suspicious noise that an email from the police suggested was linked to a dinosaur. In the same class, skilful support from teaching assistants made sure that pupils who needed individual extra help were also benefiting greatly from the activities. Pupils' behaviour and their enthusiasm for learning in the activity were very positive. Because of such teaching in the school, pupils are keen to learn and arrive at lessons promptly and willing to study.
- Assessments of pupils are accurate and used well to plan future teaching. Staff and leaders have a detailed knowledge of individual pupils as well as the complexities of some pupils' home lives. Information is used thoughtfully to adapt teaching to the needs of individual pupils.
- Better assessment and carefully considered help from staff are assisting a wide range of pupils who face challenges in their lives to overcome obstacles to their progress. A typical comment to inspectors from pupils was, 'This school has helped me a lot.'
- As the result of much careful work by leaders and staff, helpful feedback to pupils is given in line with the school's policy. Pupils say the regular opportunities to consider and respond to their teachers' comments are helping them to become better learners.
- Homework is set in line with the school's policy. Parents comment positively about the strong school focus on reading books being sent home, as well as the frequency of work needing completion away from school.
- Parents told inspectors they are happy with their children's learning and pupils say their learning is fun. Pupils explained to inspectors that teaching helps them to think and learn new ways of thinking.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils know how to help themselves and their friends to succeed at school. They are confident, polite and inquisitive. They are proud of their school. Upon the arrival of an inspector to classrooms, some pupils quietly cheered because they were thrilled to

have an opportunity to share information about their learning.

- Pupils know which foods should be eaten as part of a healthy diet. They love to eat burgers from the school canteen but they understand why they cannot be offered such food as often as they might like.
- Through regular visits to a local secondary school, Whittlefield pupils are developing a good understanding of the exciting learning opportunities ahead of them.
- Leaders and staff make sure pupils are given many opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe. Pupils say there are trusted adults they can talk to at school about any worries they have. They know that extra help is available to them from pastoral staff should they require it.
- Pupils know what might constitute bullying and say staff respond well to any identified issues. Pupils have a detailed knowledge of how to keep themselves safe while online and older pupils know how to avoid the dangers of sexting when using a mobile device. They are able to keep themselves safe when out in their community, for example when crossing roads or meeting people they do not know.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The new headteacher works successfully with staff, pupils and parents to promote a positive approach to behaviour.
- Leaders take seriously any concerns from pupils and parents about behaviour and take prompt, appropriate steps to address issues raised. Pupils who find it difficult to manage their own feelings and behaviour are given carefully considered, skilled support from well-trained staff. As a result, issues of poor behaviour rarely affect teaching and learning.
- Pupils show much self-discipline and mix well in classes and around school. They act sensibly and thoughtfully in the dinner hall at lunchtimes. They listen and respond carefully to staff whenever needed. They show respect for one another.
- Pupils' attendance is average, whereas the level of persistent absence is above average. The new headteacher has established an extensive range of activities to promote and celebrate good attendance with pupils and parents. Recent action by leaders to work with individual families is improving attendance quickly for those pupils who are absent most often.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils in the school are making good progress from their low starting points. The new headteacher and staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Standards in key stages 1 and 2 are rising quickly because of the skilled work of leaders and better teaching by teachers and teaching assistants.
- The school's own assessments of children at the end of the Reception Year have only recently become fully accurate. Therefore, it is not possible to compare their achievements with other pupils nationally at the end of key stage 1. Information provided by the school and evidence in pupils' books show that current pupils in Years

1 and 2 are achieving well across subjects.

- Pupils make good progress by the end of key stage 2. Standards in Year 6 are broadly in line with the national average. Nevertheless, some middle-ability readers did not attain as well as they should in 2016. Staff and leaders have responded promptly to this issue. They make sure that current pupils are benefiting from a more extensive range of carefully planned and adapted activities to develop their reading skills. Current pupils are becoming confident, enthusiastic readers, who read widely and successfully.
- Disadvantaged pupils who are given extra support in school through the pupil premium funding are achieving well in key stages 1 and 2, particularly in their reading and mathematics skills.
- Year 1 pupils' skills in reading familiar and unfamiliar words in the phonics screening check are below the expected standard. This reflects the specific difficulties for some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Current Year 1 pupils are expected to do well in 2017 because much focus is being given to teaching phonics successfully.
- Pupils with low abilities, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported skilfully by teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, they make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils in key stage 2 are given a good basis for continuing their learning at secondary school. For example, they are developing strong skills in teamwork and investigation.
- Pupils' skills in writing have improved across the school since the previous inspection. Pupils now write with confidence, skill and enthusiasm. Pupils show these skills well in geography, history and science activities as much as in their work in English.
- In 2016, some girls and disadvantaged pupils did not attain the expected standard in their science assessment at the end of key stage 2. Leaders have acted quickly to address this issue. For example a weekly science club for girls has been established, through which pupils are benefiting greatly from the well-planned challenges set to develop their thinking.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have a clear and well-informed understanding of the needs of young children, as well as of national expectations for children's education in the early years.
- Over the past year leaders have reviewed, re-arranged and re-established the school's provision for children in Nursery and Reception with considerable success. As a result, children are making good and sometimes outstanding progress from their starting points because of consistently good and better teaching. At the end of Reception the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is average. Parents are thrilled with the frequent discussions about their children's learning, and the progress they see their children making, for example in learning to read.
- Through the skilled leadership of the early years coordinator, the school's approach to assessing children in the early years has been extensively revised. Assessments of children are now accurate and used precisely to plan for next steps in children's learning. Leaders review the work of the team closely and have a good knowledge of

their shared strengths and areas for improvement.

- Activities throughout the Nursery and Reception are planned well by staff. Children learn to talk, write, play with one another and adults and to become confident investigators. Children enjoy the many opportunities provided by staff in the carefully planned and used outdoor area. They behave well. They are developing the skills, self-confidence and positive feelings they need, including for their later learning in Year 1.
- There are many strengths in the quality of current teaching in the early years at the school. For example, during the inspection a child was accurately counting spots on a ladybird on an electronic whiteboard then picking the correct numeral. She was thrilled with each successful selection she made, leaping with glee. One of the teachers noticed that this activity was proving to be a little easy. She worked skilfully with the child to extend the tasks to ones of even greater challenge, without interrupting the child's enthusiasm and motivation. In a different example, a number of children wanted to create a story and so a teacher acted as a scribe, resulting in stories that captured a rich, wide vocabulary and inspired children to want to write for themselves. Such opportunities are giving children a valuable head start to their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work successfully together as a team. Maximum use is made of opportunities for young children to mix and learn together as one integrated unit.
- Staff have many opportunities to learn from one another and to contribute to improving their shared work. They value children's own writing, drawing and model-making in meaningful displays around the classrooms.
- Leaders are aware that in past years disadvantaged children have not done as well as other children by the end of their time in Reception. Support for disadvantaged children currently in the early years is planned very carefully. The early years pupil premium funding received by the school is used thoughtfully to give children extra assistance in their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	119262
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10024287

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Bullock
Headteacher	Helen Kershaw
Telephone number	01282 429 419
Website	www.whittlefield.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	head@whittlefield.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 February 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and several other staff are new to the school since the previous inspection.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the government's pupil premium funding is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.

- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club: 'Whitty Kids Club'.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum, pupil premium and physical education and sport premium funding on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in classes and around the school. The Her Majesty’s Inspector (HMI) made several observations jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils’ work and talked to pupils about their learning. Inspectors heard some pupils read. The HMI looked at a range of pupils’ work with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke to some parents from the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 classes. Inspectors considered information from a school survey of parents and reviewed 30 comments made by parents in response to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in class and around the school. The HMI reviewed responses from 32 pupils to an Ofsted online pupil survey and held a meeting with 12 pupils chosen at random from Years 1 to 6.
- The HMI held two meetings with the governing body, involving six governors including the chair.
- Inspectors met with a range of teaching and pastoral staff throughout the inspection and considered responses from nine staff to an Ofsted online survey. The HMI met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors examined a range of school documents, including reviews of how well the school is doing, plans for the future and information about the progress of current pupils. Inspectors checked school policies and records regarding behaviour, attendance and the care and protection of pupils.
- The first day of the inspection was observed by an Ofsted inspector as part of their training. They were not present on the second day and played no part in the judgements made by the inspection team.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Stephen Rigby	Ofsted Inspector
Pritiben Patel	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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