

Inspection of a good school: Whixall CofE Primary School

Brownsbrook, Whixall, Whitchurch, Shropshire SY13 2SB

Inspection dates:

8 October 2019

Outcome

Whixall CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming and friendly school where pupils achieve well. Staff have high expectations of all pupils. Pupils arrive in the morning excited about what they are going to learn. Staff greet them cheerily and welcome them by name. Staff and pupils know each other well. This helps pupils to feel safe and secure. Pupils know who to go to if they are worried and are confident they will get the help they need.

Pupils are kind to each other and have excellent manners. They hold classroom doors open for each other and wait patiently in line for lunch. The school is distinctly Christian. Staff promote the values of respect, care, support, tolerance, perseverance, forgiveness and trust. Each term, they focus on a different value. They involve parents in this, too, by providing resources to help them promote it at home.

Pupils behave well in lessons. During playtime and lunchtime they play nicely, and no one is left out. On the rare occasions when pupils are unkind to each other, staff step in and resolve it quickly. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they were happy and felt safe in school. Parents, staff and inspectors agreed.

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

Pupils achieve well in a range of subjects. This is because the curriculum is well planned. Teachers make sure that lessons connect to each other. This enables pupils to build on what they already know and practise the skills they have learned. Teachers check how well pupils have understood their work and they use this information to help them plan future lessons. However, this does not happen as well in history. Teachers consistently provide appropriate support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Reading is a priority in the school. Phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is taught from the very beginning of Reception Year by experienced and well-trained staff. Teachers teach phonics in a systematic way. They deliberately repeat familiar letter

sounds, which helps pupils to grow in confidence. Teachers check regularly how well each child is doing. They know exactly where they should be at the end of each term. They are quick to spot when a child is at risk of falling behind, and equally quick to provide support. Because of this, pupils who do fall behind catch up quickly.

Pupils enjoy reading and share their stories with excitement. They enjoy reading together as a group and with their teachers. They read with expression and confidence. Pupils choose their own reading books from a range that has been carefully selected for them.

Two years ago, leaders noticed that pupils were not achieving as well in mathematics as they were in reading. Leaders have addressed this successfully. Mathematics lessons are now sequenced in a logical way that helps pupils to develop their mathematical skills well. Teachers check that pupils have fully understood their work before they move on to a new topic.

Pupils behave well in lessons and enjoy learning. They respect their teachers and appreciate the help they receive. They respect each other too. They listen politely to what others have to say and they respond with kind words.

One of the school's aims is for pupils to 'develop lively, enquiring minds so that they can understand and appreciate the world around them'. Pupils have access to a wide range of activities and experiences. For example, every pupil in key stage 2 learns to play a musical instrument. There are regular trips, chosen to complement what pupils are learning in lessons. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 recently visited Nantwich to learn about the Tudors, a topic they were studying in history. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures during lessons and by visiting places of worship. Last year pupils visited a synagogue in Liverpool to learn about Judaism. Leaders make sure that pupils are being well prepared for life in modern Britain.

The school is benefiting from working with another school in the same trust. Trustees and leaders have arranged for staff to help and support each other. This is working well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff prioritise keeping pupils safe. Pupils feel safe and parents are confident that they are safe. Leaders make sure that when they appoint new staff they are suitable to work with children. All staff receive appropriate training. They know how to identify a pupil who may be at risk from harm, and what to do if they are concerned. Staff get help quickly if pupils need it, and if necessary they refer concerns to those who have the expertise to help.

Staff talk to pupils in lessons and assemblies about how to keep themselves safe. They also invite the police into school to reinforce this.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment is not used consistently well in all subjects to check how well pupils have understood their work. Sometimes assessment is used to check how well pupils can recall a narrow range of facts, rather than the depth of their understanding. Leaders and teachers should ensure that assessment is used to check how well pupils have understood their work, and how well they can apply their knowledge.
- Lessons are not sequenced consistently well in all subjects. For example, in history topics are not taught in an order that allows pupils to build their knowledge and develop their skills incrementally. Leaders and teachers should ensure that lessons are sequenced consistently well in all subjects.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Whixall CofE (Controlled) Primary School, to be good on 31 January–1 February 2013.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	143325
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10111717
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Cladingbowl
Headteacher	Nicola Brayford
Website	www.whixall.shropshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in December 2016. The school is part of the Fields Multi-Academy Trust and has a Christian ethos. The predecessor school was last inspected in January 2013.
- The school has a breakfast and after school club. This provision is managed by the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and assistant headteacher. Inspectors spoke with a range of staff, including teachers and teaching assistants, about their experiences of working in the school. Inspectors met with members of the trust and the governing body. Inspectors discussed the work of the school with a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors focused on reading, mathematics and history during the inspection. Inspectors considered the school's curriculum plans, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors also met with pupils to discuss their learning in these subjects and listened to pupils read.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including leaders plans to improve the school, and the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- When inspecting safeguarding, inspectors considered the school's procedures for recruiting staff, the quality of staff training and the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils about their experiences of school. Inspectors also spoke to parents about their experiences of the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the parent and staff surveys. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Niall Gallagher, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mike Onyon

Ofsted Inspector

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