

Inspection of a good school: Whiston Willis Primary Academy

Milton Avenue, Whiston, Prescot, Merseyside L35 2XY

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 October 2022

Outcome

Whiston Willis Primary Academy continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils achieve well. This is because leaders have high expectations and the subject curriculums are well thought out and taught effectively. Pupils enjoy their learning. They remember key information, including the meaning of important new words such as hemisphere, equation and biodiversity.

In the early years and in key stages 1 and 2, children and pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning and school life. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), said that they feel safe and have friends at school. They feel included in activities. Pupils spoke with much confidence and understanding about world issues, such as the importance of recycling.

Many pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities, for instance basketball, reading club and eco-club. Pupils undertake many special roles at school. They said that they feel involved in the running of the school and helping to making Whiston Willis a fantastic place to learn.

Pupils are sensible and well behaved. Older pupils are very polite, even when they disagree with the opinions of others. Pupils who struggle to manage their own feelings or behaviour are supported well by staff. Leaders and staff resolve bullying quickly and effectively. This gives pupils confidence to share their concerns.

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

Leaders have a clear and convincing understanding of how to design and implement a high-quality curriculum. They have ensured that the subject curriculums are ambitious and tailored to the needs of all pupils, including children in the early years. Leaders

ensure that the school's curriculum clearly considers the essential knowledge that staff will teach and emphasise.

Subject leaders help staff to understand the content of the curriculum and the order in which it should be taught. Teachers have well-honed subject knowledge. They use learning activities successfully to help pupils to know and remember more. As a result, pupils achieve highly. Children in the early years gain a first-rate start to their education. Pupils in Year 6 are very well prepared for secondary school.

Pupils follow a broad curriculum. This helps them to develop their knowledge across the full range of subjects. Teachers carefully use assessment checks to spot any gaps in pupils' knowledge, including any lost learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers carefully revisit previous learning so that pupils develop an excellent grasp of curriculum content. In the early years, staff expertly support and extend children's learning, such as when children play with well-chosen resources to practise what they have been taught.

Leaders have established a sharp focus on the teaching of reading beginning in the Nursery class. Leaders previously identified some weaknesses in staff's delivery of the phonics curriculum. They have since improved the reading curriculum very well. Leaders have ensured that all staff who teach early reading are fully trained and well supported to gain the expertise that they need. Leaders have also made sure that the reading resources enable pupils to practise their phonics knowledge by reading books that match the sounds they have learned. Staff very competently support the weakest readers to catch up quickly with their peers. Pupils become fluent, confident readers. They skilfully read a wide range of high-quality fiction and non-fiction books from the school's well-resourced library.

Careful work by leaders, including leaders from the multi-academy trust, has ensured that staff identify pupils with SEND accurately and as soon as they can. Staff support pupils with SEND capably so that they learn the content of the subject curriculums.

In classrooms throughout the school, pupils learn quietly and keenly. Due to pupils' sensible conduct, their learning is rarely interrupted. Starting in the Nursery and Reception classes, staff successfully teach children and pupils how to behave as learners at school.

Leaders ensure that staff teach pupils a rich, well-considered curriculum to support their personal development. For example, pupils profit from learning about protecting endangered animals from extinction. They learn about their own rights, as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Leaders and staff meaningfully develop pupils' cultural understanding, including through well-established links with schools in other countries. Pupils respect differences between themselves and other people, families and communities.

Staff are highly positive about the culture of the school. They appreciate the access that they have to do useful training. Staff use their professional learning very effectively in

their work at the school. Staff said that leaders ensure that they have a reasonable workload.

The governing body understands the work of the school, including the impact of the curriculum on pupils' achievement. Governors support and challenge the work of leaders very well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a well-informed understanding of safeguarding issues, for example domestic abuse and criminal exploitation. They ensure that staff and governors complete regular safeguarding training. Leaders, including leaders of the multi-academy trust, routinely review the quality of school's safeguarding policies and practices. School leaders thoroughly check the knowledge of all staff.

Staff are vigilant for changes in pupils' behaviour or other signs that pupils' welfare may be in question. Staff carefully record details of any safeguarding concerns. Leaders review such information about pupils thoroughly, liaising with other agencies where necessary. Leaders ensure that staff can get the advice that they need.

Pupils said that they feel safe at the school. They said that they can speak with pupil buddies or raise their concerns with staff, such as through classroom worry boxes. Staff ensure that all pupils are taught about staying safe, including how to protect themselves online.

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 predecessor school, Whiston Willis Community Primary School, to be good in September 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 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	145613
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10241412
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	333
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Fowler
Principal	Ian Cooper
Website	www.whistonwillis.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Wade Deacon Trust.
- The school converted to become an academy school in May 2018. When its predecessor school, Whiston Willis Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The principal, several staff and governors are new to the school since the inspection of the predecessor school.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. He met with subject leaders, visited lessons, including learning activities in the Nursery, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with staff and pupils.

- The inspector met with the principal and other senior leaders throughout the inspection. The inspector met with three members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. He met with two representatives of the multi-academy trust, one of whom attended the meeting remotely.
- The inspector met with leaders to discuss the early years, SEND, behaviour and the provision for pupils' personal development.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the free-text comments. He took account of responses from staff and pupils to Ofsted's online surveys and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with leaders, staff and pupils. The inspector checked a sample of leaders' safeguarding records and reviewed the recruitment checks made on staff.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022