

Whitburn Village Primary School

Cleadon Lane, Whitburn, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR6 7NS

Inspection dates

2–3 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- A lack of effective leadership and management in recent years allowed outcomes to decline. Leaders did not make enough checks on teaching or provide good enough guidance to help teachers understand the raised expectations of the national curriculum.
- Pupils make significantly less progress in reading and mathematics than that of other pupils nationally. The progress of pupils currently in the school, including those who are disadvantaged, remains inconsistent. Provisional results for 2017 show pupils' attainment was below the national average.
- The quality of teaching is too variable and has not supported good progress. A high level of staff absence last year also had a negative effect on pupils' learning.
- A lack of thorough assessment means teachers have not tailored lessons well enough to meet the needs of their classes. As a result, the most able pupils have not made good progress.
- Pupils' experience of the wider curriculum is limited. They have, until recently, done very little investigation work in science and history. As a result, their subject-specific skills have not been developed well enough.
- Pupils make a good start at the school because the early years are well led and managed. The quality of teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes supports children's good progress.
- Pupils feel safe, enjoy school and show respect and caring for one another and for adults. Although overall attendance is in line with the national average, a minority of pupils miss school too often.
- The skills of governors need further development so that they can assure themselves that leaders' actions are moving the school forward rapidly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and acting deputy headteacher are providing strong leadership. Their accurate evaluation of the school and well-focused planning have provided a clear sense of direction.
- Improvements to teaching are being made quickly. Leaders are demonstrating the skills to improve provision and accelerate pupils' progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, to accelerate pupils' progress, by:
 - ensuring that teachers gather and use assessment information to plan suitably challenging work for pupils, especially for those who are the most able
 - making sure that additional help is provided for pupils who are not on track to attain their target, especially if they are disadvantaged
 - giving extra help to less confident readers so that their fluency and comprehension skills develop faster
 - ensuring that topics covered across the wider curriculum develop pupils' subject-specific skills effectively
 - improving the teaching of mathematics, so that pupils routinely have opportunities to explain their thinking and to apply their knowledge to mathematical problems
 - developing the role of teaching assistants, so that they make a greater contribution to accelerating the progress and learning of pupils who need extra help.
- Reduce the proportion of pupils who miss school regularly by working more closely with their families.
- Continue to develop the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - reviewing leadership roles and responsibilities in order to make the best use of leaders' skills
 - ensuring that new systems to manage teachers' performance are fully implemented
 - making regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning and providing teachers with helpful feedback that develops their practice
 - implementing an effective pupil premium strategy that narrows gaps between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school
 - improving the skills of governors, so that they can astutely evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the school was last inspected, outcomes for pupils have declined because of a growing number of weaknesses in the quality of leadership and management. In the last year, a number of vital leadership and management systems did not work effectively. The performance of teachers was not managed properly and leaders did not provide staff with enough training or guidance to adapt to changes in national curriculum expectations. A lack of monitoring and proper assessment procedures meant leaders were not aware that pupils were making weak progress. Some leaders did not have the necessary skills to lead on their areas of responsibility.
- Governors and the local authority identified concerns over a year ago. A number of parents and carers also expressed dissatisfaction with their children's education. The local authority undertook a series of reviews, which sharply highlighted where improvements were needed. The local authority also brokered a package of support from another headteacher, who, following the retirement of the school's senior leaders, has taken over the leadership of the school. Following this challenging transitional period, the school now has the capacity it needs to move forwards and the confidence of parents is being restored.
- The new headteacher has evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately and written a back to basics school development plan. New systems are quickly being established. For example, all teachers now have annual objectives linked to the priorities in the school development plan. More ambitious targets for attainment have been set. Teachers have assessed pupils' levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers' expectations are being raised and new planning is helping to ensure that the content of the national curriculum is being covered more fully. However, much of this work is recent and has only just begun to make a difference.
- The curriculum is rather unbalanced. Planning for pupils' academic development needs improvement. Skills such as reading comprehension, problem-solving in mathematics and scientific investigation are not taught consistently well. However, pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered more strongly. This is demonstrated in the positive values pupils display through their very respectful and caring relationships with one another. There are good sporting and cultural opportunities and participation in after-school activities is high. These strengths in the curriculum ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The new headteacher is currently reviewing the school's pupil premium strategy and has requested an external review of how this additional funding has been used in recent years. The pupil premium strategy is not available on the school's website. In the meantime, some sensible actions have been taken. The headteacher has ensured that all teachers know who the disadvantaged pupils are and has set ambitious targets for their attainment. Leaders have arranged meetings to hold teachers to account for the progress of all of their pupils, especially the disadvantaged. Some additional help has begun to be provided on a one-to-one or small group basis.
- The primary physical education and sport premium funding is used to better effect. The new leadership team reviewed how the money was spent last term and has focused

this term on the most successful approaches. External sports coaches work in school across the day to provide coaching in a wide range of sports. Participation levels are high.

- Last term, with the help of the local authority, the school reviewed its provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. A number of gaps in provision were identified and action is being taken to address them. A new special educational needs coordinator has been appointed and pupils have individual action plans, which are being reviewed regularly in conjunction with parents and other agencies. The planned programme of pupil progress meetings will be used to measure the effect of the extra support provided for pupils. Special educational needs funding is therefore being used effectively.

Governance of the school

- In the past, governors did not make sufficiently thorough checks to identify weaknesses in leadership and management. It was not until the autumn of 2016 that governors became concerned. Since then, they have taken effective action, in conjunction with the local authority, to evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and to fully understand parental concerns. Together with the local authority, they have sensitively managed a process of change in the leadership of the school.
- The governors know there is still work to do to completely restore the confidence of all parents. However, they know the new headteacher has made a positive start. In order to develop leadership further, they have entered into a close partnership with an outstanding school. This partnership is already proving purposeful and helping members of staff at different levels to improve their practice.
- Governors have recently realigned their monitoring roles to link to the priorities in the school improvement plan. However, their skills in monitoring and evaluation were not strong enough in the past and further training and development are needed to ensure that their checks are sufficiently thorough.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The new headteacher immediately reviewed safeguarding and child protection arrangements when she began working in the school. She found policies and practices were up to date and well organised. Some actions have been taken to improve how concerns are recorded and reported by members of staff. This has ensured that good records are maintained.
- All members of staff understand the duty upon them to act if they have any concerns about a child's safety or welfare. Up-to-date training means staff know what signs to look for and what steps to take. Currently, leaders have a low level of cases to manage, but the culture in school ensures that staff are vigilant.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Weak leadership in the past has led to variability in the quality of teaching. Leaders did not do enough to check on the effectiveness of teaching or whether pupils were making the progress they should. In addition, teachers were not trained well enough and consequently do not have a sufficiently detailed understanding of the expectations within national curriculum subjects. As a result of the variability in teaching, pupils did not attain well enough last year.
- The new leadership team in the school has acted quickly to raise expectations and to give teachers clear guidance. For example, a new marking policy is already having a positive effect. Recent training has also raised teachers' expectations and some have begun to set work which is more challenging. Leaders are now checking the work in pupils' books more assiduously and giving teachers helpful feedback. However, these approaches are a recent development. Their effect on pupils' progress and learning is yet to be realised.
- The quality of teachers' planning is variable. Until recently, teachers did not have reliable assessment information and were not clear enough about pupils' starting points. While they have begun to put in place some more coherent long-term plans, some teachers still do not do enough to meet the different needs of pupils in their classes, especially the most able. The headteacher has quickly ensured that assessment practices are now in place and some teachers have begun to tailor the learning activities in their lessons so that they are suitable for pupils with different starting points.
- Leaders have prioritised the teaching of mathematics as an area for development because rates of progress in the subject have been weak. Recent training has been provided to ensure that teachers help pupils understand topics in greater depth and can confidently apply their knowledge to solving mathematical problems. The evidence in pupils' books shows some teachers beginning to do this well. However, other teachers still lack confidence and continue to focus only on teaching basic methods of calculation. As a result, their pupils continue to make less progress than they should.
- The teaching of reading and writing is improving. The changes made to the marking policy mean pupils are more routinely redrafting and editing their work to improve it. Teachers now expect pupils to write independently each week and to use the specific teaching they have had on grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils try hard and find the guidance and feedback they receive helpful.
- Teaching assistants give effective support in lessons. They are increasingly being used at other times, such as during assembly, to give extra help to pupils who fall behind. Leaders are aware they should make better use of the capable teaching assistants they have. They are looking at ways to better use their skills and to provide extra help for pupils who need it.
- Many parents expressed concerns last year about the leadership of the school and the adverse effect it was having on teaching and their children's progress. During the inspection, inspectors spoke to many parents and considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. It became clear that most parents' concerns are now diminishing, as the new leadership team has restored the community's confidence.

Teachers who were absent for periods last year are also back at work and morale in the school is much improved.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to foster pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils come to school happy and they enjoy one another's company. They play together pleasantly at social times, often in mixed-age groups. Inspectors noted relationships between adults and pupils are warm and friendly, reflecting the school's values centred on developing respectful and responsible citizens.
- The school's curriculum fosters pupils' understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. There is a well-planned programme of lessons that allow pupils to discuss topics about relationships and personal development. The 'dare to dream' display encourages aspiration and other displays encourage a good diet and exercise as important factors in a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils benefit from good sporting opportunities and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The breakfast club is well attended and after-school clubs are very popular. Pupils clearly enjoy opportunities such as working in the school garden, Fun-fit and film club. There are also a broad range of experiences beyond the school that broaden pupils' horizons, including outdoor pursuits, trips and a visit to a regional science centre.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils greet one another and adults in a friendly and warm manner at the start of the day. They settle quickly in lessons and conduct themselves well across the day. They try hard to complete tasks and present their work neatly. Records show almost no incidents of poor behaviour or bullying over the last year. Just occasionally, pupils become distracted or less interested when the teaching fails to engage their interest fully.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and are keen to take part in discussions or to answer questions. Pupils told inspectors there is very little poor behaviour in the school and they feel safe. They trust their teachers implicitly to sort out any issues they have.
- Levels of attendance are in line with the national average for primary schools. There is very little difference between the overall attendance of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school. Pleasingly, attendance figures for this academic year show an improvement on last year. However, there are some disadvantaged pupils who miss school regularly, which has an adverse effect on their learning and progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes have declined since the previous inspection because leaders and managers did not check the quality of teaching carefully enough or hold teachers to account for

pupils' progress. Furthermore, too much staff absence last year also undermined the quality of learning, further slowing pupils' progress.

- Children enter the school with skills that are typical for their age. Although they make a good start, their progress slows as they move through the school. In recent years, their progress in mathematics has been significantly weaker than that seen nationally. Provisional results from 2017 national tests show this has continued to be the case. Progress in reading and writing has also been no better than average. As a result, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been below average. In 2017, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was 13% below the national average.
- In recent years, pupils have made secure progress across key stage 1 and attained standards in reading, writing and mathematics in line with the national picture. Most pupils develop good phonics skills, although some pupils struggle to develop their grasp of phonics into fluent reading. Pupils told inspectors an adult listens to them read each week. However, for some pupils, this is not enough to ensure that their reading fluency and comprehension skills develop quickly.
- Pupils' learning and progress across the wider curriculum are inconsistent. The work in pupils' books from last year shows national curriculum subjects such as science and history have not been covered in sufficient detail or depth. However, recent training from leaders has begun to make a difference. Teachers are now more focused on developing subject-specific skills. For example, inspectors observed pupils successfully designing and testing the strength of World War II Anderson Shelters in a design and technology lesson.
- In mathematics, pupils have not made the progress they should because teachers have focused too much on teaching calculation methods. There have been far too few opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to mathematics problems. In some mathematics lessons observed by inspectors, teachers did not ask sufficiently probing questions to check pupils' level of understanding or to get pupils to explain their thinking. Here again, recent training is just beginning to give teachers more confidence to use challenging problems to develop deeper mathematical understanding.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils has been weak and lags well behind that of other pupils nationally. Leaders have not implemented a coherent strategy to provide disadvantaged pupils with additional support. As a result, gaps in their subject knowledge have not been addressed. The new headteacher has recognised this. She has made sure that teachers know who the disadvantaged pupils in their classes are and has introduced regular progress meetings with teachers to hold them to account for their pupils' progress. However, the effect of these changes is yet to be seen.
- Until recently, the most able pupils have not made the progress they should. Current leaders have quickly raised expectations and have begun to ensure that the most able pupils are challenged more effectively. Inspectors' checks on some of the most able pupils' books found this term's work to be more demanding and completed to a better quality.
- Following a review of special educational needs arrangements in the school, the needs of pupils are being met effectively. Teachers have helpful information about pupils' particular learning needs and deploy teaching assistants effectively in lessons. As a

result, pupils who have SEN make good progress.

Early years provision

Good

- From broadly typical starting points on entry to the Nursery and Reception, children make good progress. Effective leadership of the early years has resulted in steady improvements in outcomes over time. Outcomes at the end of the Reception Year have been better than seen nationally in recent years. Leaders are confident of reaching their ambitious targets next summer. However, leaders are aware that not many children have made really rapid progress in the past and relatively few have attained standards above those expected for their age. Consequently, they are now working on providing more challenging tasks to strengthen children's grasp of reading, writing and number skills.
- The early years leader and her team work closely with parents to establish a clear picture of children's starting points when they enter the school. During the day, they make frequent ongoing assessments as children learn. As a result, teachers know their children well and prepare suitably challenging activities to help move their learning forwards.
- Learning activities linked to particular themes incorporate children's ideas and interests effectively. For example, the Halloween story of 'Room on the Broom' was cleverly used to encourage role play and the building of a broom in the outdoor area. Encouragement from the teaching assistant prompted the children to retell and enact the story for themselves and skilful questioning pushed the children to experiment with language to bring the drama to life.
- Children demonstrate positive attitudes and quickly adopt good routines. They listen intently to instructions and take part in independent tasks enthusiastically. Inspectors noted how children maintained their concentration, worked together and persevered when tasks were difficult to get right. Children develop good social skills, ensuring a positive climate for learning in which they respect one another's views and choices. The early years environment is safe and secure and welfare standards are fully met.
- Children who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported. Adults are always there to help when necessary, but are careful to give children some independence when they are confident to explore activities on their own or with other children.
- The early years leader is ambitious and determined to help every child get off to the best possible start. She makes regular checks on the quality of provision and carefully plans what needs to be improved. She has fostered a good team approach between the teachers and other adults. Her good leadership of the early years means extra help is given to disadvantaged children to help them catch up and address any gaps in their learning.
- The children's progress across the year is monitored carefully and evidence is recorded in individual children's learning journals. While these journals provide a good picture of children's general progress, they do not record in enough detail the development of children's writing or ability with number.

School details

Unique reference number	131917
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10036412

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	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Davies
Headteacher	Alison Burden
Telephone number	0191 529 3069
Website	www.whitburnvillageprimary.co.uk
Email address	info@whitburnvillage.s-tyneside.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 July 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum, the pupil premium strategy or the effect of the primary physical education and sport premium on pupils' participation and attainment in sport on its website.
- Whitburn Village Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which are the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2.

- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils and a range of after-school activities.
- The headteacher who was in post at the time of the previous inspection retired at the end of the summer term. The new headteacher was appointed at the start of October 2017. The school also appointed an acting deputy headteacher, who is temporarily seconded from another school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons across all phases of the school, including the Nursery and Reception classes. Some visits to lessons were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. During observations, inspectors sampled pupils' books and talked to pupils to evaluate the quality of their current work. In addition, inspectors scrutinised in detail a sample of books containing work from a broad range of subjects. The lead inspector also listened to a number of pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils at playtime and lunchtime and observed their movement and behaviour around the school. Inspectors also visited the school's breakfast club.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the early years leader and special educational needs coordinator and a group of pupils. Inspectors also met with a group of governors including the chair of the governing body and spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, policies, assessment information and records of checks on the quality of teaching. The inspector looked at records of attendance, behaviour, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of 82 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and also considered parents' free-text responses. An inspector met with a group of parents. In addition, the inspector took account of the 15 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Chris Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Cathy Lee	Ofsted Inspector
Frances Gowland	Ofsted Inspector
Dimitris Spiliotis	Her Majesty's 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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