

Whitfield St James' CofE (VC) Primary School

Chadwick Street, Glossop, Derbyshire SK13 8EF

Inspection dates

4–5 June 2019

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that their initiatives to bring about improvements are applied consistently well. The quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are not sharply focused. Leaders are not as effective as they could be in holding staff to account.
- Middle leadership roles are at an early stage of development. Middle leaders are not as effective as they could be in improving standards.
- The governing body has not been as effective as it should be in holding leaders to account for the progress made by pupils and the impact of additional funding.
- Teachers are not consistent in teaching pupils how to edit and improve their own writing.
- Teachers sometimes do not have high enough expectations of what pupils, particularly the most able, can achieve.
- Teachers, including in the early years, sometimes do not match work as well as they could to pupils' different abilities.
- Too many pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in mathematics.
- The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils too often are below that of other pupils and pupils nationally.
- Teachers sometimes do not ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of the fundamental ideas in mathematics or develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are establishing a culture of higher expectations. They and other staff are bringing about positive improvements.
- The teaching of reading is effective. Pupils have positive attitudes to reading and make good progress.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is enhanced well by a range of extra-curricular opportunities.
- Pupils behave well at all times of the school day. They are friendly, polite and courteous.
- Staff promote pupils' personal development well. Relationships are positive. There is an ethos of mutual respect.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:
 - the impact of their initiatives to bring about improvement is consistent
 - they further develop the roles of middle leaders so that they have greater impact in improving standards in their areas of responsibility
 - plans for improvement are more sharply focused to better hold staff to account
 - they refine their strategies to improve the progress and raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils
 - the governing body acts upon the findings of the forthcoming review to hold leaders more effectively to account. This includes checking the progress made by the different groups of pupils and the impact of additional funding provided for them.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to improve pupils' progress and raise their attainment by ensuring that all teachers, including in the early years:
 - have high expectations of what pupils, especially the most able, can achieve
 - more effectively use information about pupils' learning to address misconceptions and match work to pupils' abilities
 - give pupils a secure understanding of the important ideas in mathematics and develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills
 - teach pupils how to evaluate, edit and improve their writing, particularly in regard to grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The recently established senior leadership team has a clear vision for improvement and is bringing about positive changes. Members have managed a period which includes financial and other challenges well. Leaders are establishing a culture of higher expectations. They are implementing a range of actions to improve, for example, the teaching of mathematics, the use of assessment and resources to support learning. However, they have not ensured that the impact of their actions is consistent. The quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils is too variable.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas in which it needs to improve. They identify relevant priorities. However, their plans for improvement are not focused sharply enough on improving pupils' outcomes. They, and the governing body, are not able to hold staff to account as effectively as they could.
- Many middle leaders are new to their roles. Middle leaders are positive and they welcome the support and training they receive. They have opportunities to check standards and they identify the aspects which need to improve in their areas of responsibility. However, much of this work is at an early stage. Many middle leaders are not yet effective in raising standards.
- Leaders are now ensuring that the pupil premium is used more effectively than has previously been the case. However, differences in the attainment and progress of disadvantaged and other pupils, and that of pupils nationally, remain. Leaders have not checked the impact of the funding carefully enough. Their plans do not focus sharply enough on the impact leaders wish to see. The governing body has not been as effective as it should be in holding leaders to account for the impact of the funding.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is used well. Leaders quickly identify pupils' needs and review their learning carefully. Many parents and carers spoke positively about the support their children receive. These pupils make strong progress from their different starting points.
- The additional primary school funding for physical education (PE) and sport is used increasingly well. Leaders use the funding to improve the quality of teaching to ensure that the impact of the funding is sustained. The funding is used to support clubs such as football, dance, multi-sports and climbing. Leaders now more carefully review the proportions of pupils participating in sporting activities and events.
- Leaders and other staff ensure that the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils benefit from the extra-curricular opportunities and school trips. For instance, pupils in key stage 2 spoke of a recent trip to France where they had learned about the two World Wars. The school provides a rich range of musical opportunities. Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Leaders now carefully review pupils' progress and meet with staff to identify pupils who are falling behind. They have strengthened the processes for managing the performance of teaching and provide support where teaching is less strong. The quality of teaching is improving.

- External support from the local authority has been effective in supporting improvements to leadership, governance and the early years. The local authority undertakes regular visits to meet with leaders. The school also works with a local cluster of schools to, for example, enable teachers to share expertise to improve the accuracy of their assessments of pupils' learning or to develop middle leadership roles.
- The very large majority of parents are positive about all aspects of the school's work. Parents say their children are safe and enjoy coming to school. Many parents commented on the changes that have taken place since the appointment of the new senior leadership team. Many highlighted that communications had improved.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is not as effective as it should be in holding leaders to account for aspects of the school's work and performance. Governors recognise this. They have commissioned an external review of governance to identify how they can better support and challenge leaders. They are committed to improving their own effectiveness.
- The governing body has not been effective in ensuring that the school meets the requirements of what should be published on the school website. Some aspects were updated during the inspection.
- The governing body has been effective in managing recent staffing and financial challenges. They have appointed a senior leadership team which is bringing about improvements.
- Governors understand and are proud of the school's positive role in the school community. Leaders and governors have a shared ethos in which pupils are at the centre of their work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a secure culture of safeguarding.
- Leaders record the checks they carry out on adults before they are able to start volunteering or work alongside pupils. These meet all statutory requirements. Some improvements were made to record-keeping during the inspection.
- All staff know what they should do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. Concerns are reported to the school's designated leaders for safeguarding who ensure that they are recorded carefully, including the actions taken.
- Leaders take timely action when they have concerns about pupils' welfare and well-being. They are tenacious in involving external agencies when this is appropriate and keep detailed documentation of the actions they take.
- Staff receive regular training to ensure that they are kept up to date with safeguarding requirements. Staff have received training on the government's 'Prevent' duty, for example.

- The large majority of parents are very confident that staff deal effectively with any concerns, including those relating to bullying, should they occur. Instances of bullying or derogatory behaviour are rare.
- Parents say the school keeps their children safe. Several commented on improvements made to the safety of the school site.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Teachers do not have equally high expectations of what pupils, particularly the most able, can achieve.
- Teachers are sometimes not as effective as they could be in using information about pupils' learning to match work well to pupils' abilities. Too often, pupils are not challenged to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The guidance that teachers provide for pupils to improve their work and address misconceptions varies. For example, misconceptions relating to spelling, grammar or punctuation sometimes continue over time and this slows pupils' progress. Teachers do not consistently teach pupils how to evaluate, edit and improve their writing.
- Staff have received some training to develop their subject knowledge and expertise in the teaching of mathematics. They are becoming more skilled in using visual imagery and apparatus to support pupils' learning. However, staff are not equally skilled in ensuring that pupils are fluent in understanding the important ideas in mathematics. Teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills well.
- Teaching assistants are often effective in supporting pupils' learning, particularly when working with individuals. However, the deployment of teaching assistants is inconsistent.
- The teaching of phonics and reading comprehension skills is effective. Resources are well organised. The teaching of reading is often lively and focused. The teaching of phonics is brisk. The inspectors observed some skilful and probing questioning to improve pupils' inference and deduction skills.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and often plan lessons which interest pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are learning in lessons and what is expected. Pupils told inspectors that teachers try to make their lessons fun and spoke with enthusiasm about scientific investigations and games in mathematics.
- Staff are enthusiastic and relationships are positive. Staff praise pupils for their efforts and encourage pupils to collaborate well. Staff promote pupils' confidence. Pupils generally have positive attitudes and enjoy their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils greatly enjoy the wide variety of roles and responsibilities the school offers. These include the school librarians, house captains, school council, head and deputy head, boys and girls. Staff encourage pupils to be responsible. Pupils explained, 'We're representatives of the school.'
- Staff promote pupils' well-being well through 'nurture' work and initiatives such as the morning 'rise and shine' club, which provides breakfast, an opportunity to talk and a calm start to the school day, as well as encouraging good manners. Older pupils described the school's 'family atmosphere' in which everyone knows everyone: 'You can talk to anyone', pupils told the inspectors. The playground buddies offer someone for pupils to talk to at break and lunchtimes if they have a worry.
- Pupils are proud of their school and like their teachers.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. The work of staff is complemented by visits from, for example, the NSPCC, the fire brigade and the police. Pupils spoke confidently about water and fire safety, and how to keep themselves safe when online.
- Pupils understand the importance of their learning. For instance, pupils in Years 5 and 6 explained why they were learning about global warming: 'Because we're the next generation and we might be able to fix things.' Pupils are also encouraged to be enterprising, for example in organising fundraising activities.
- Leaders and other staff have established an ethos of mutual respect. Staff teach pupils the importance of respecting others, including those who may be different from themselves. A typical comment was, 'It doesn't matter who you are or what religion you are, we see each other as people.' However, some older pupils are not as confident as they should be in their understanding of some aspects of the fundamental British values.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave and conduct themselves well at all times of the school day in classrooms, school corridors, on the playground or at lunchtimes. They are polite, courteous and have very good manners. They often held doors open for the inspectors or were helpful with directions.
- Staff use consistent approaches to managing behaviour. The 'going for gold' system is understood well by pupils. They understand how they will be rewarded for their efforts and good behaviour. Staff provide support for pupils who find behaviour more difficult. Pupils and many parents said that behaviour had improved over recent times.
- Pupils enjoy school. Teachers ensure that classrooms are calm, orderly places to learn. Pupils take pride in their school, their appearance and increasingly in their work. Pupils are keen to do well and apply themselves to all that is asked of them. They only lose focus in lessons when work is not matched well to their ability.
- Attendance is improving and is currently above the national average. Leaders check attendance carefully and emphasise the importance of attendance with parents. They make concerted efforts and take reasonable actions, including working to support families of pupils who have persistent absence.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- At the end of key stage 2 in 2018, pupils' progress in reading and writing was average and progress in mathematics was below that seen nationally. The progress of disadvantaged pupils was below that of other pupils and pupils nationally, particularly in mathematics.
- The proportions of pupils achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years have been close to the national averages for the last two years. At the end of key stage 1 in 2018, pupils' attainment was higher than the national averages for reading and writing, and similar for mathematics. The proportions of pupils achieving the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check were similar to the national average. In general, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was below that of pupils nationally.
- Pupils' progress is inconsistent in different classes and subjects. Current pupils' work throughout the school shows that many pupils are making good progress in writing, mathematics, other subjects and particularly reading. However, too many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils are making improving progress in mathematics. However, pupils are often asked to complete too many tasks that pupils understand rather than being challenged to extend their thinking. Pupils do not develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills as well as they could. This slows their progress.
- Standards in writing are improving. However, the quality of pupils' writing is sometimes let down by inaccurate spelling, grammar and punctuation. The quality of pupils' handwriting is inconsistent. This again slows the progress pupils are capable of making.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. Staff ensure that pupils enjoy and have positive attitudes to reading. Pupils told inspectors about an assembly where the key message was, 'If you don't like reading, it's because you haven't found the right book yet!' Pupils can read letters and blend sounds confidently. They can apply their reading skills in their writing. Pupils acquire inference and deduction skills well.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Most children join the Reception Year with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. In 2018, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was similar to the national average. Many children make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders check carefully the progress of all children and identify priorities for improvement. For example, leaders have identified that children's attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics are not as strong as they could be. However, their actions to improve standards in these areas are not as sharply focused as they could be. Leaders have not improved teaching and the curriculum well enough to ensure that all children make consistently strong progress, including for the most able.

- Leaders and other staff design a range of activities in the indoor and outdoor classrooms that provide opportunities for children to learn across the curriculum. These are often interesting for the children. Children in Nursery, for instance, were observed enthusiastically jumping forwards and backwards along number mats they had put in order. However, activities sometimes do not provide sufficient challenge to improve children's perseverance and independent learning skills.
- Teachers and other adults often use questioning effectively to take children's learning forward. For example, in Reception, children were observed sharing pasta pieces between toy giraffes. The teacher helped the children use the vocabulary relating to halving and sharing. However, the quality of teaching is inconsistent across the early years. Teaching is sometimes not as sharply focused as it could be. Teachers do not have equally high expectations of what children can achieve.
- Leaders manage transition arrangements well. Parents contribute effectively to assessments of children's learning. This includes their sharing of 'wow moments' of children's developments and achievements outside of school.
- Many parents told inspectors that their children settle well in the early years. Routines are well established. Children have positive attitudes to their learning. They collaborate well and are respectful of each other. Children's behaviour is good.
- Leaders ensure that the welfare requirements for the early years are met.

School details

Unique reference number	112818
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10087256

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	321
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ben Powell
Headteacher	Craig Woodward
Telephone number	01457 852 427
Website	www.st-jamesprimary.co.uk/
Email address	info@st-james.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 December 2015

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher was appointed in January 2018. A deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2019. The governing body has many new members including the recently appointed chair.
- Whitfield St James' CofE (VC) Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school receives support from the local authority through regular visits.
- The school has a breakfast club.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and of pupils who speak English as an additional language, are well below those seen nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is similar to the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 18 lessons, the majority jointly with senior leaders. During these visits, the inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke with them to evaluate the quality of their learning. The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work with leaders, met with groups of pupils and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. Account was taken of the 59 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and free-text responses. There were 16 responses to the pupil and 26 responses to the staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. The inspectors met with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- A range of documents were scrutinised. These included those relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' attainment and progress. The inspectors looked at plans for improvement as well as leaders' evaluation of the school's performance. The inspectors also considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

John Lawson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector
Doreen Davenport	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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