

Inspection of Whitley Village School

Village Lane, Lower Whitley, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 4QH

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The executive headteacher of this school is Hannah Broom. This school is part of The Rowan Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Phil Rimmer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andy Wilson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love attending their small, friendly village school. They learn and have fun every day. Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging. They feel that they are part of a caring family where adults know them well and always have their best interests at heart. Older pupils look after younger pupils. Pupils thrive within this nurturing atmosphere, from when they start school in the early years foundation stage.

The school's vision is to 'produce adults who change the world'. Pupils rise to this expectation by doing their best in all aspects of school life. They work hard in their lessons and achieve well as a result.

Pupils participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as fencing and Scottish dancing. Pupils are encouraged to take part in competitive sports and other creative events, whether they be skilled or less confident. The school fosters pupils' aspirations for their futures by inviting visitors to talk about their career pathways.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They always embody the school rules and show high levels of respect towards each other and to adults in school. They take responsibility for their own behaviour, including during unstructured times such as playtime. The atmosphere in school is calm and positive.

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

The school has designed an exciting, well-ordered curriculum, which considers the local area and rural context. There is clear ambition for all, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum is broad and offers a wealth of rich learning opportunities in many subjects. The school uses a range of effective strategies to check on pupils' learning. It uses this information to correct misconceptions and gaps in learning swiftly. In a small number of foundation subjects, the learning activities sometimes do not support all pupils to build new knowledge on what they already know.

The school ensures that early identification of pupils with SEND is an absolute priority. It works with parents and carers before children start in the Reception Year to ensure that there is appropriate provision in place. Teachers are well trained in supporting these pupils and make skilful adaptations to allow them to progress well through the curriculum.

The school has the expectation and determination that all pupils will learn to read. Staff are well trained and deliver the phonics scheme skilfully. They identify any pupils who are in danger of falling behind and provide immediate support to keep them on track. Pupils read books which contain the sounds that they are learning and become fluent readers by the end of key stage 1. The school places a real importance on developing a love of reading across the year groups. Older pupils are avid readers and talked about a wide range of books and authors with knowledge and enthusiasm.

The school's approach to managing behaviour ensures that pupils develop high levels of self-regulation and independence. This is developed from when they start school in the Reception Year. Pupils are highly invested in their learning and uphold the principle that everyone has the right to learn. This helps to ensure that incidences of low-level disruption are extremely rare.

The school expects high levels of attendance and punctuality. It works hard with parents and families to achieve these. This means that the vast majority of pupils benefit from regularly being in school and on time.

The school is very aware that its location in a rural village could limit pupils' experience and understanding of other cultures. The wider curriculum is therefore carefully designed to thread through regular opportunities to strengthen pupils' knowledge and appreciation of other cultures and beliefs. Pupils know that they have rights and that these come with the responsibility to treat others as they would like to be treated. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. The school ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy, for example by agreeing a healthy snack policy with pupils. Pupil road safety officers lead assemblies for the school.

Professional development for staff is a high priority. The school continuously makes effective use of current educational research. The school engages exceptionally well with parents and involves them fully as partners in their children's education. Staff feel that leaders have their well-being at the forefront of any decisions, for example when making changes to the curriculum. They are very proud to work at the school.

Trustees and the local governing body know the school very well. The trust maintains a strong oversight while allowing the school autonomy to develop and deliver its curriculum. Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and are involved in setting the strategic direction of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of subjects, some staff do not select activities that support pupils to learn the intended curriculum sufficiently well. On occasion, this hinders how well pupils build on what they already know to make sense of new learning. The school should ensure that staff are equipped to design activities which support pupils to acquire new learning and deepen existing knowledge so that pupils know and remember more across the curriculum.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	149089
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10348397
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andy Wilson
CEO of the trust	Phil Rimmer
Headteacher	Hannah Broom
Website	www.whitleyprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Rowan Learning Trust.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, the inspectors met with the executive headteacher and a wide range of other staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the trust, the trust CEO and the trust director of primary education.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school and while in lessons.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- The inspectors also viewed examples of pupils' work in a range of other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed pupils in Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- The inspector reviewed key documents, including the school's self-evaluation form, school action plans and monitoring records.

Inspection team

Liz Davidson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lee Comber

Ofsted 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 2024