

Inspection of Whitfield St James' CofE (VC) Primary School

Chadwick Street, Glossop, Derbyshire SK13 8EF

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 July 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of Whitfield St James' school. The school's values of 'wisdom, achievement, hope, friendship, thankfulness and forgiveness' are lived out daily. Pupils are happy and feel safe. They are welcoming, polite and respectful. They value the staff and appreciate the care that they receive. An older pupil echoed the thoughts of many, saying, 'The staff are lovely. They make the school; it's like a family.'

Leaders have established high behavioural expectations. These are met. Pupils have positive attitudes. Many have improved attendance this school year. Pupils believe that the staff would deal with bullying quickly and supportively were it to happen. Bullying is rare. Pupils mix well with each other. Older pupils take their 'buddying' responsibilities of younger children seriously. Pupils care for each other.

Opportunities for pupils' personal development are positive. Pastoral care is strong. Leaders successfully focus on developing pupils' characters, resilience and self-confidence. Pupils recall many memorable experiences, including their positive experiences on trips and visits and their positive relationships with staff.

Parents and carers overwhelmingly value the school. As one parent commented: 'My children really do love this school; nothing is too much. It's a home away from home, where they feel looked after and are pushed to achieve their highest potential.'

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

Leaders work with a clear vision, passion and determination. They have improved the school since the previous inspection. They lead with a strong moral purpose.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is broad in its scope, from Nursery to the end of Year 6. They have developed ambitious curriculums in many subjects. These enable pupils to revisit and build on previous learning. The mathematics, science and history curriculums are particularly well developed. Pupils confidently build scientific investigation skills over time. They gain fluency in the use of mathematical knowledge. They apply their knowledge to mathematical reasoning. However, leaders have not ensured that all subject curriculums are equally as ambitious. For example, teachers are not aspirational enough in design and technology, or computing.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They help pupils to learn the key knowledge and skills in most subjects. Teachers check pupils' learning in English, mathematics, science and some other subjects. However, leaders have not developed effective ways to check pupils' learning in all areas.

Leaders have prioritised reading. They recognise that 'Pupils need to read to open the doors to the curriculum.' Staff nurture a love of reading. Pupils enjoy the daily reading sessions, where they read a variety of texts, including novels, non-fiction books and poetry. Children get off to a quick start with learning to read in the early years. Staff are trained to teach the school's chosen phonics scheme. Staff teach phonics consistently well. Pupils gain confidence and become fluent readers. They use their phonics knowledge to deepen comprehension and develop writing. Teachers assess pupils' reading regularly. They spot pupils who need to keep up, providing additional support when needed.

Leaders identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) very effectively. They work with external professionals to make sure that these pupils get additional help. Teachers adapt their teaching to enable pupils to access the same learning as their peers. For example, teachers scaffold and break down tasks. Many parents recognise the positive provision for pupils with SEND.

Children in Nursery and Reception get off to a great start. They are well cared for. Staff provide rich opportunities that develop literacy and mathematics. Teachers focus on developing children's speech and communication. They promote children's personal, social and emotional development very well. Staff have high expectations and establish routines well. Children learn, explore and play creatively. Leaders have developed a nurturing curriculum that prepares children well for their next steps.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development well. They plan enriching experiences. Pupils learn about right and wrong and the importance of rules and laws. They learn the importance of respect, and they learn about different faiths and beliefs. They gain from opportunities to visit museums, theatres and galleries. Leaders support pupils to be actively involved in the community. For example, the school parliament is promoting recycling locally. Pupils have well-planned opportunities to learn about healthy relationships and age-appropriate sex education.

Governors fulfil their roles well. They know the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They challenge and support leaders appropriately. They are mindful of leaders' workload. The vast majority of staff are very positive about the school. They recognise that leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being. Staff are proud to be part of, and enjoy working at, the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know and understand their responsibilities. They receive regular training and updates, and they know pupils and their backgrounds very well. Leaders and staff ensure that pupils are kept safe. They take appropriate steps when they spot concerns related to the welfare of pupils. They work with external agencies to provide additional help when needed. Pupils learn about potential risks and how to be safe when, for example, online and in the community. Pupils learn

about water and road safety. Leaders adapt the curriculum to help pupils know how to keep safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some foundation subjects are not as ambitious as they could be. Pupils are not consistently challenged in all aspects of these subjects. Leaders must ensure that all foundation subject curriculums are suitably ambitious and that they are implemented to meet high expectations, enabling pupils to know and remember more in all subjects.
- Leaders have developed effective approaches to assessment in the core and some foundation subjects. However, they have not established secure approaches to assessment in all foundation subjects. In these subjects, teachers do not fully check pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that effective approaches to assessment are in place in all foundation subjects, enabling teachers to identify what pupils have learned and what they need to learn next.

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	112818
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10254862
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	318
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Emma Whitehead
Headteacher	Craig Woodward
Website	www.whitfieldstjamesprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 and 5 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England school with a Christian ethos. It received its Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools in January 2023.
- Two new senior leaders have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders. They met with governors, including the chair. They spoke with local authority and diocesan officers.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, reviewed curriculum planning, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, met with pupils about their learning, reviewed samples of pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors looked at a range of other subjects, including personal, social, health and economic education, geography, French, design and technology, computing and music. They visited lessons, reviewed curriculum plans and samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils to talk about the quality of education and other aspects of school life. They spoke with staff and pupils informally.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and reviewed the provision for pupils with SEND. They met with early years leaders.
- Inspectors met with safeguarding leaders. They reviewed safeguarding policies and records and the single central record.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation. They looked at the school's website and published information about the school's provision, policies, self-evaluation and development plans.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents who completed the Ofsted survey, Parent View, including the free-text responses. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

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