

Inspection of Whitkirk Primary School

Templegate Walk, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS15 0EU

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming school. Leaders and staff hold what is best for pupils at the centre of everything they do. Pupils and parents and carers overwhelmingly agree that 'The Whitkirk Way' is both friendly and inclusive. Staff create a happy environment where pupils feel safe and want to learn.

Leaders ensure that pupils understand uniqueness and celebrate difference. Pupils engage well with their peers from the on-site special school during their shared breaktimes. Staff build an inclusive culture where pupils are respectful of the rights of others.

Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. From early years onwards, children are taught to have self-control. Where pupils struggle with behaviour, teachers make adaptations to help them to be successful. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils work together to repair any harm caused to others as a result of their actions. Behaviour is highly positive both in and out of lessons. Break- and lunchtimes are an enjoyable experience where all pupils engage in meaningful activities. In lessons, they work with resilience in a calm and focused learning environment.

Leaders have implemented an ambitious curriculum. Pupils begin by understanding themselves and their locality. Links across subjects aim to connect long-term knowledge.

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

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is inclusive for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well through curriculum adaptations and individual support. Staff are trained and confident to teach any new initiatives. Teachers regularly revisit pupils' learning to make links between subjects. However, the knowledge gained in some subjects, such as design and technology and religious education, is less developed than in others. Pupils can recall current and recent learning but find it difficult to recall things they have learned in previous terms and years. Leaders recognise that this is because some subjects are at an early stage of implementation. This means that learning in these subjects is less secure, particularly for older pupils, who have had less time to benefit from recent improvements.

Leaders ensure that learning to read is a high priority for all pupils. Phonics is taught as soon as children start school. Adults are experts in delivering the programme. This is because leaders have ensured that staff receive regular training and support. As a result of this, those pupils at risk of falling behind are quickly identified and given extra, daily practice. Pupils use their phonic knowledge to read unfamiliar words in books containing the sounds that they know. Children in early years use well-known routines when pretending to be the teacher. They love learning to read.

Pupils access a well-stocked library. The reading ambassadors keep the library in order. They support pupils with book recommendations. Class libraries have a wide variety and range of age-appropriate texts. Teachers read to pupils daily, showing them how to read fluently. This builds excitement in sharing texts. Leaders provide outdoor quiet spaces where pupils can sit and read. Pupils enjoy using these spaces.

Leaders are highly ambitious for children in early years. Routines for learning are well established. Children choose and use equipment safely and skilfully. They help to tidy up, using the mantra, 'Choose it, use it and put it away!'. Every activity and interaction are carefully considered. No learning is left to chance. Staff expertly provide appropriate teaching and ways for children to interact. Children show high levels of concentration and focus during independent play and learning. Staff develop pupils' communication and language well. Children enjoy 'chatter natter' sessions, where they spend time developing their conversation skills. As a result, children speak clearly and confidently using taught vocabulary. Mathematics is taught daily. Children have many planned opportunities to practise what they have learned. They work confidently with number bonds during independent play. Children are exceptionally well prepared for key stage 1.

All pupils experience a wide range of after-school clubs and trips throughout the year. Pupils have opportunities to take on different leadership roles. Eco-warriors are proud of the small steps they are taking in school to make a global difference. The school council writes to local businesses for support with the school's allotment project. They show younger pupils where food comes from. Pupils take these roles seriously. They have opportunities to contribute to assemblies on topics such as sustainability. This is helping pupils to become active citizens.

Leaders know their community well. Communication and relationships are strengths of the school. The trust and those responsible for governance provide strong and effective support. Staff feel well supported. Following a period of instability, new leaders have created a highly positive culture. They lead by example. This has secured the support and enthusiasm of all. Parents speak very highly of the school and credit leaders with 'bringing the school back to life'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff know the potential risks that pupils may face. They work closely with the local high school to develop a thorough awareness of risks in the community. Leaders regularly update staff on safeguarding issues and check understanding. A programme piloted by the school directly addresses the risk of exploitation. Pupils talk with understanding about how to keep themselves safe. Leaders and staff quickly identify any pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders work together to identify and support any vulnerable pupils. They take time to ensure that pupils and families get the right support. Pupils feel safe. They know who the trusted adults are in school. They know that they can use 'speak out' boxes in class to share any concerns and that these concerns are dealt with.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is less securely embedded in some foundation subjects than in others. This means that pupils have not yet built a cumulatively sufficient depth of knowledge for future learning. Leaders should continue to ensure that all foundation subjects are consistently implemented across school, so that pupils connect their knowledge over time, using and applying it in deeper and more complex ways.

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	146219
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10255571
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	385
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Chris Tulley
Headteacher	Gemma Quarmby
Website	www.whitkirk.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school opened as an academy converter school and is part of Red Kite Learning Trust.
- The school does not use any registered 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 a wide range of staff, including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders. Inspectors also met with representatives of the local governing body, trustees (including the chair), the director of primary education and the chief executive officer.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history, science, and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record and safeguarding records. They also spoke to leaders for safeguarding and to pupils and staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils both formally and informally, including single-sex groups of pupils.
- Inspectors considered a variety of school documents, including the school development plan.
- Inspectors took account of the views of staff and parents through surveys, including Ofsted Parent View, and spoke to some parents as they picked up their children from school.

Inspection team

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