

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Whitemoor Academy

Crown Road, Whitemoor, St. Austell, Cornwall PL26 7XH

Inspection date:

14 January 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that aspects of the school's work may not be as strong as at the time of the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The head of school is Gemma Hooper. This school is part of Aspire Academy 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), Rachel Warwick, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Penny Shilston.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of their school. They support each other to meet the high standards that the school has for their conduct and attitudes to learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and nurturing. This starts in early years where children are encouraged to engage and interact with each other in a positive way, using increasingly ambitious language. This is strengthened as pupils move through the school. The positive relationships that pupils have, contribute to their happiness in school.

There is a wide range of well-considered opportunities for pupils to deepen their awareness of the wider world and nurture their own talents and interests. Pupils enthuse about taking part in these activities. They make links with how they support their learning in lessons.

Pupils are keen to learn. The school is aspirational for what it wants pupils to achieve. However, the quality of some aspects of the curriculum is not good enough. The school, and wider trust, know the changes that are needed to improve the effectiveness of what and how pupils learn in some areas. However, the changes are yet to make enough difference to how pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding, across the curriculum, over time.

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

The school's curriculum makes clear the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn from Nursery to Year 6. For most subjects, this includes attention to how the curriculum can be appropriately adapted for disadvantaged pupils. However, the way the curriculum is delivered is not as effective as it needs to be. It does not fully enable some pupils to learn and retain knowledge over time as intended. This is evident in the low 2024 published outcomes, as well as in the school's effectiveness in checking pupils' prior learning and understanding. The school's approaches to checking pupils' progress are inconsistently applied. This leads to gaps in learning not being identified and addressed accurately and swiftly. Consequently, pupils struggle to remember the curriculum or to develop a deeper understanding of some of the concepts taught. Added to this, at times teachers do not deliver the curriculum in a way that helps pupils to build on prior learning. This hinders further how well pupils develop detailed knowledge. In some instances, the recently reviewed curriculum and staff changes have added to these challenges.

Pupils learn to read well, starting with exploring sounds in Nursery. This prepares them successfully for the phonics programme in Reception and key stage 1. Pupils use the sounds they know to read books that are well matched to their reading ability. Those who struggle typically find blending sounds more difficult. Pupils get the additional support they need to progress these skills and develop fluency and confidence in their reading.

The school promotes a love of reading. Pupils are encouraged to read and enjoy texts to increase their awareness of the world around them, as well as to increase their vocabulary. This begins in early years where there is a clear focus on children developing their language and oracy skills. Children ask questions to support their curiosity and problem solving. This was demonstrated by children successfully working together to create a competitive skittles game and when helping penguins break free from their ice cubes.

The school swiftly identifies children in early years who need additional support to overcome barriers to learning, putting the right adaptations in place for successful learning. This is replicated across the school as pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified with precision. The school is working successfully to strengthen the adaptations it makes to meet pupils' SEND.

There is a shared goal to build pupils' aspirations for their futures in the provision for pupils' wider development. The school increases pupils' awareness of what life beyond school and their local area can offer. Pupils confidently express their views and opinions and respect those that may be different to their own. They develop their independence and sense of responsibility in leadership roles they hold. Pupils value the part they play in contributing to the school through fundraising. They want to be in school because they rightly view it as a kind and welcoming place to learn. The school has improved the attendance of pupils over time. It takes action to support families to address any concerns as they arise.

Staff are committed to making the necessary changes to get the best from pupils. The trust's in-depth knowledge of the school, supported by the hub council, positively influences staff's well-being and development. This ensures that, with time, staff will have what is needed to improve the quality of education for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not accurately check on and address misconceptions in some pupils' learning. Additionally, there are times when checks on what pupils know and understand are not as effective as they should be. Consequently, pupils do not build new learning well enough because they do not have a secure grasp of prior knowledge to do so. The trust, working with the school, must ensure that teachers make more precise and accurate use of assessment to inform what pupils are learning and how to build on this with greater success.
- The school has not ensured, in some aspects, that staff have the required expertise to support pupils to learn all that they should. At times, the content of what pupils learn is not set out clearly enough. Activities are not designed to support learning as well as they could be. As a result, in some areas, pupils do not know and remember as much as they do elsewhere. The trust, working with the school, must support staff to use effective approaches to present curriculum content and support pupils to secure their learning.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding,

behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in July 2019.

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	138963
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10344649
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Penny Shilston
CEO of the trust	Rachel Warwick
Headteacher	Gemma Hooper
Website	www.whitemoor.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 July 2019

Information about this school

- The school does not have two-year-old children on roll currently. Provision in the Nursery is for children from three years old. The school has recently completed a consultation period about having two-year-olds on its roll.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the head of school, the school's strategic partner from the trust, other leaders from the trust and school staff. In addition, an inspector met with the school's representative from the hub council.

- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also spoke to a range of pupils to gather their views about the school.
- 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 in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors reviewed school documents, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement. The inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum, SEND, safeguarding and behaviour.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and parents' free-text comments. An inspector met with some parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspectors spoke with staff to gather their views about the school and considered their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Leanne Thirlby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Tustain

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 2025