

Whipton Barton Junior School

Hill Lane, Exeter, Devon EX1 3JP

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, not enough pupils have attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Initiatives to improve pupils' achievement are not resulting in sustained impact.
- Pupils have not made good progress in acquiring the range of knowledge and skills to equip them securely for the next stage of their education.
- Until recently, there has been too much variation in the quality of teaching, and not a consistent enough challenge in the activities that pupils are expected to do. This has inhibited progress, including that of the most able pupils.
- Pupils, particularly the most able, do not have enough opportunities to develop their skills across the curriculum. There are not enough writing and problem-solving challenges and not enough pupils read with the expected levels of comprehension and accuracy.
- Although diminishing, there are still gaps in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils compared with other pupils in the school and pupils in similar schools nationally.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, although improving, is still inconsistent.
- The rate of attendance has varied. Too often, it has fallen below the national average.

The school has the following strengths

- Since his appointment in 2016, the executive headteacher, ably supported by other senior leaders, staff and governors, has worked resolutely to eradicate weaknesses in teaching and improve pupils' achievement.
- These efforts are gradually improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- During this time, behaviour has improved both around the school and in lessons. Pupils are keen to learn.
- School leaders, at all levels, understand the remaining weaknesses in the school. Their expectations are now much higher and they are planning more effectively for further improvement.
- Pupils feel safe and well supported. Those pupils who receive targeted interventions are now making better progress.
- Most parents and carers are very positive about how well the school looks after their children's welfare. It is a very welcoming and inclusive school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by:
 - ensuring a greater level of challenge in lessons for all pupils, regardless of their starting points in school
 - further developing the range of interventions for pupils at risk of underachieving, particularly to reduce the remaining gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school, as well as with other pupils nationally.
- Strengthen the rate of pupils' progress and improve the level of attainment by:
 - ensuring more challenge in the writing pupils do in subjects across the curriculum
 - continuing the focus on improving reading, especially for those pupils who join the school with levels of skill and understanding below expectations
 - putting more emphasis on mathematical problem-solving.
- Improve attendance, particularly that of vulnerable pupils, by continuing to work with those families who do not ensure that their children attend regularly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since his recent appointment, the executive headteacher has worked resolutely to improve teaching, raise attainment and improve pupils' progress. He has sustained some existing strengths in the school. He has overcome some of the significant challenges posed by instability in staffing, which had affected the school at all levels. Leaders have instilled a new sense of accountability and purpose.
- Supported by a more effective governing body, the current leaders quickly recognised where there were weaknesses in the school's performance. On joining the school, these leaders immediately began to make improvements. The result is that leaders are now helping pupils across the school to achieve better outcomes. The work already done shows that the school has the capacity to improve further.
- Although teaching is improving, it is not yet good because it has been too inconsistent over time. School leaders have made staff more accountable for pupils' progress. They have helped staff to develop their skills and confidence. Recent changes in staffing, some of which resulted in formal procedures, have helped to strengthen classroom practice.
- School leaders now check on the quality of teaching and learning more regularly and systematically. Because staff are well supported, they show commitment to further improvement and their morale has been raised.
- Middle leaders, such as subject leaders and the relatively new special educational needs coordinator, now have more responsibilities for supporting staff, checking progress and improving progress. This is having an impact on improvement throughout the school.
- School leaders work closely with the partner infant school, with parents and with outside agencies to provide a high standard of welfare. Parents value the impact of this work, particularly on vulnerable pupils.
- Staff now apply a revised behaviour code which has had a positive impact on behaviour. For example, during the past year, the number of pupil exclusions has fallen substantially.
- The leadership team has revised the curriculum during the past 18 months. New themes encourage a more exciting approach to a range of subjects and involve a higher degree of challenge. Pupils told inspectors how they appreciate these opportunities.
- The school has used the physical education and sport premium funding effectively to strengthen sport both in the timetable and in enrichment activities outside lessons. Pupils now enjoy new opportunities such as learning archery. There has been an increase in pupils' participation levels. The school has a good record in competitive sport.
- Staff use special educational needs funding well, by giving appropriate training to staff to support pupils who have particular learning and emotional needs. This is having a

positive impact on several pupils. Nonetheless, some inconsistency remains in the progress pupils make.

- Staff teach pupils about life in modern Britain beyond the local area. They learn about the workings of democracy. They are also taught to respect each other, and to understand and respect different cultures. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well. An inspector attended a whole-school assembly led by an author, which emphasised the importance of children having goals and ambitions.
- School leaders recognise that one of their priorities is to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. The school spends its pupil premium funding in a variety of ways: for example, on staff interventions to give pupils more personalised learning opportunities, and on encouraging more participation by the pupils in enrichment activities such as clubs and visits. However, school leaders acknowledge that there is still a gap between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils, both those in the school and pupils nationally. Further reducing this gap remains a priority in the school's improvement planning.
- The local authority has provided support for the school, and has analysed for itself the progress that the school is making in addressing previous weaknesses. It recognises the improvements being made.
- School leaders have improved teaching and several aspects of pupils' progress. However, previous underachievement was considerable, and so the impact of the school's improvement work has been gradual. Leaders fully acknowledge that learners, regardless of their abilities or starting points, need to make the best use of their opportunities. They are committed to ensuring that no pupil leaves the school without the knowledge, understanding and skills vital to the next stage of their education.

Governance of the school

- There has been a considerable transformation in governance in the past two years. There have been several changes in personnel and a redistribution of roles in the governing body. As a result, the capacity of the governing body to bring about further improvement is good.
- The new structure has encouraged governors to be more active in the school, for example by coming into school to look at pupils' work. They are now much more knowledgeable about the school's strengths and necessary areas for development.
- As well as supporting the school, governors now constructively challenge leaders, for example about the impact of additional funding.
- Governors benefit from a range of training opportunities to develop their expertise and ability to hold the school's leaders to account for the quality of education. They are also very aware of their role in safeguarding and in ensuring that the school meets specific child protection requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Clear policies and procedures ensure that pupils get good care and protection on a day-to-day basis. School records confirm that staff deal promptly with any untoward incidents.
- Staff confirmed to inspectors that they all receive regular updates to keep them aware of any potential safeguarding concerns. Staff understand the importance of vigilance and knowing to whom they should report any concerns.
- The school carries out the necessary employment checks on staff and ensures that there are appropriate record-keeping procedures.
- The school employs its own family support worker and uses outside agencies, where necessary, to ensure the well-being of vulnerable pupils and to support families.
- The school gives advice to both parents and pupils on how to reinforce safety, for example when using the internet. Parents say that their children are safe. The school maintains a strong culture of safeguarding in order to ensure pupils' well-being.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, over time, it has not been effective enough in ensuring that pupils make good progress.
- Although teaching has improved during the last year, there has not been the consistently good teaching necessary to accelerate pupils' progress rapidly enough and to eradicate underachievement.
- For too long, there have not been consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve in their work. Teachers do not always challenge the most able pupils enough to develop their knowledge and understanding fully. This can happen in lessons when these pupils do not move on early enough to tasks that would encourage them to think more deeply, for example when working through problems in mathematics.
- Staff have access to assessment data and understand the need to tailor work to pupils' particular needs. Nevertheless, sometimes, pupils are not clear enough about the purpose of the lesson or what is expected of them, for example in mathematics.
- The progress that many pupils make in writing is increasingly evident in their English books. However, teachers do not always expect the same quality of written work in other subjects, as seen for example in some of the science work.
- Although staff have worked to improve pupils' reading skills, there continue to be pupils reading at a level below the expectations for their age.
- Teaching is improving. Teachers apply the school's policy on marking and feedback consistently, so that pupils now have a better understanding of the quality of their work and what the next steps in their learning should be. Often, pupils respond to these comments, which is supporting them to make faster progress.
- Teachers have the respect of their pupils and encourage them to take pride in the presentation of their work.
- Teachers deploy teaching assistants increasingly effectively in lessons, and this is helping the progress of several pupils who have particular learning needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides strong pastoral care to ensure pupils' welfare, including for those who have particular learning or emotional needs. Parents value this greatly.
- Pupils are confident in class. They know that teachers value their views. When pupils respond verbally in lessons, other pupils listen respectfully. Pupils show a positive attitude towards learning.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility, for example on the school council.
- Pupils enjoy the breakfast club, which gives them a healthy start to the school day. A high proportion of pupils also enjoy the range of after-school clubs. Older pupils benefit from the opportunity to go on trips, for example to Dartmoor and London. This encourages them to develop independence successfully and an understanding of different locations.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, and whom they should approach if they need help.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. The school provides an orderly and supportive environment. Conduct in lessons is usually good. Pupils have the opportunity to relax at breaktime and lunchtime or take part in a range of activities with their friends.
- Pupils understand the nature of different types of bullying. Staff have worked hard to reduce incidents of bullying, with success, as most parents and the pupils themselves testify. The school has developed a policy of rewards and sanctions, which is working well in ensuring good behaviour.
- Most pupils enjoy coming to school. However, attendance is not as good as it should be. More often than not in recent years, it has been below the national average for different groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. The school has researched the reasons for this because weaknesses in attendance have contributed to insufficient progress for some pupils. Leaders have worked hard to engage with parents whose children do not attend regularly enough: the school supports families, but also emphasises the importance of regular attendance and takes further steps to enforce this when necessary. Attendance is one of the priorities in the school improvement plan, and leaders know it must maintain this focus.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over recent years, not enough pupils have achieved the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave school. This has been evident in the

results of national tests in Year 6. Progress has been too slow, despite signs of some improvement in the 2017 results. The underachievement affected most groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.

- The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is too wide. There are signs that it is narrowing, but it is inconsistent. The progress of other groups, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, is improving, but is also inconsistent.
- In relation to their starting points, the proportion of pupils reaching expected standards is still not high enough to represent good achievement. Not enough of the most able pupils are challenged to reach the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, pupils sometimes do tasks in lessons that do not encourage writing of sufficient depth. Some pupils still make frequent errors in spelling and punctuation.
- The small number of pupils in the school who speak English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well in all subjects.
- Since 2016, leaders have worked hard to improve standards and achievement. There has been some success. Mathematics is improving because of leaders' emphasis on developing pupils' mental mathematical and calculation skills, although this is not yet fully embedded.
- Pupils enjoy the new curriculum. Teaching is having more of an impact. However, there are still inconsistencies in some year groups, which is why not enough pupils are yet reaching the expected standards or achieving beyond them.

School details

Unique reference number	113093
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10042676

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chairs	Stacey Andrew and Mike Beresford
Executive Headteacher	Gary Read
Telephone number	01392 466072
Website	www.whiptonbarton.org
Email address	admin@whiptonbarton.org
Date of previous inspection	4–5 December 2013

Information about this school

- Whipton Barton Junior School is a slightly below the average-sized school.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- In 2015, the school federated with the neighbouring school, Whipton Barton Infant and Nursery School. The two schools have one governing body. In 2016, the current executive headteacher was appointed to be in charge of both schools. Since the previous inspection, the school has had several changes of leadership and in other staffing.

- The school meets the floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school operates a breakfast club and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, inspectors visited most classrooms to observe pupils' learning and behaviour. They carried out most of these visits jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held several meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. They also carried out an extensive scrutiny of pupils' work. They heard pupils read.
- Inspectors talked with pupils and with parents in the playground. An inspector attended an assembly and the breakfast club.
- The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. He also met with two governors.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of itself, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, assessment data about the pupils currently in the school, attendance data and documents relating to various aspects of safeguarding.
- The inspection team took account of 29 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

John Laver, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Katherine Powell

Ofsted Inspector

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