

# St White's Primary School

St White's Road, Cinderford, Gloucestershire GL14 3DH

**Inspection dates** 3–4 November 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The senior leaders exhibit a relentless determination to ensure that their vision for the school is realised.
- The headteacher's high expectations are reflected in all aspects of the school's work. Her leadership has resulted in significant improvement since the last inspection.
- Standards are rising throughout the school as a result of good teaching. Pupils are increasingly being challenged to achieve their potential.
- Over the last three years, pupils' progress has improved rapidly so that, overall, pupils achieve well.
- Provision in the early years is good. As a result, children joining the school in the Reception Year get off to a strong start with increasing numbers being well prepared for the start of Year 1.
- The high-quality teaching of phonics (the links between sounds and letters) is improving pupils' reading skills.
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. During lessons, pupils are attentive and responsive and show keen interest in the activities planned.
- The broad range of subjects supports pupils' learning well. There is a strong focus on providing pupils with purposeful opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy in most subjects.
- Staff are very vigilant at ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. As a result, pupils feel very safe.
- The governing body has been instrumental in supporting the successful drive for improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A legacy of previous poor teaching means that there are gaps in some pupils' knowledge and use of English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Attendance remains lower than average.
- The recent changes introduced to provide carefully targeted support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have not yet had time to impact fully on pupils' outcomes.

## **Full report**

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Increase pupils' attainment in writing by improving their use of English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Raise parents' awareness of their responsibility to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.
- Monitor the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to ensure that their support plans meet their needs and are helping them to fulfil their potential.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since the last inspection, the new leadership team has risen to the challenge of realising their vision that 'the school becomes a beacon of excellence delivering a high level of education'. Leaders have taken the bold steps needed to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement. The headteacher leads from the front. Her strength of character and determined leadership has enabled the school to reinvent itself.
- The headteacher's passion and high standards exemplify what this school is all about. She receives strong support from senior colleagues and, together, they have created a culture where high expectations are the norm.
- The leaders' strong focus on raising standards has resulted in a forensic examination of the overall quality of teaching and a comprehensive review of staffing. Through the rigorous application of the school's performance management systems, leaders challenge underperformance, which has resulted in changes of staff. Staff appointed to the school are supported well with a strong and appropriate emphasis on continuing professional development. The impact of this approach is very evident with the successful appointment of four newly qualified teachers who are all benefiting from high-quality support as part of their induction programme.
- The leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and know where further improvement is still required. They have conducted a thorough scrutiny of each and every system in the school to identify where change is needed. This approach resulted in leaders reviewing the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. As a result, they have taken firm action to ensure the provision is tailored to meet pupils' needs. However, at the time of the inspection, the changes had not had sufficient time to show impact, but the early evidence is encouraging.
- Central to the school's future improvement is the plan to extend the role of middle leaders. They already make a significant contribution to the school's effectiveness, for example by leading the drive to strengthen the teaching of phonics and improve the effectiveness of teaching across the early years.
- The school's additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is utilised very effectively. Leaders are innovative in finding new ways to help disadvantaged pupils to access a range of subjects and engage with learning. As a result, this group of pupils perform well, make good progress and achieve standards in line with or above those achieved nationally by other pupils.
- The PE and sports premium is also used well. It has been used to provide specialist teaching and to introduce pupils to a wide variety of sports. The impact of the funding has been to increase pupils' participation levels in sport and gain experience of competitive events, such as the recent successful cross-country races.
- Leaders are determined that pupils make good or better progress every year. To ensure that they do so, teachers have designed and implemented a wide range of learning themes that provide pupils with a balanced range of subjects. Current topics, such as 'The World's Kitchen', promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as it teaches them about different ways of living. Through the current project, pupils learn about food from other cultures. It has also developed their understanding about the Fair Trade organisation, which helps producers to get a fair price for their produce. This carefully planned approach exemplifies how the school ensures that pupils are helped to develop their understanding of fairness and equality in a wider context. Pupils also benefit from having access to a growing range of clubs and visits that enhance their learning experiences.
- Teachers are increasingly using current events to raise pupils' awareness of what it means to live in modern Britain. The General Election was one recent example where pupils discussed the idea of democracy, which is a fundamental part of British values. Building on this approach, pupils enjoyed the experience of canvassing and then electing school council members before debating and voting for the new class names.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors are fully committed to the school's continued development. They have risen to the challenge of working with the senior leaders to bring about the improvements needed. Following the external review of their work, significant changes have been implemented, which have improved governors' effectiveness in holding school leaders to account. They play a full and active role in setting future priorities for improvement and they work closely with senior leaders to monitor and evaluate teachers' performance. Through the detailed reports they receive from the headteacher and other

leaders, the governors are well informed about the school's progress. Governors' meetings are well led. They hold robust and focused discussions to debate current issues and review progress being made. The clerk to governors records detailed minutes that show clearly how decisions have been determined. Governors with specific responsibilities meet regularly with their link school leader to discuss their particular area of interest and ensure that progress is being made in line with the school's improvement plans.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding is taken very seriously at the school. Staff are fully trained and aware of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe at all times. Senior leaders know which pupils are at risk and take good care to ensure their safety through liaising closely with pupils' families.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. As a result, teaching is now good across the school and the previous inadequate teaching has been eradicated. This improvement is enabling pupils to make much faster progress than in previous years.
- Teachers share their planning and discuss how they can help pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding. Lessons are interesting and organised well so that pupils enjoy the work and want to complete the activities planned.
- Teachers have high expectations of the pupils they teach. They are increasingly demanding about the quality of pupils' work. Pupils' workbooks are well cared for and, in most instances, work is presented neatly. Occasionally, teachers do not make their expectations clear enough with the result that some pupils do not work to the standard required. This is why teaching is not outstanding.
- Teachers have good levels of subject knowledge and engage quickly and confidently to discuss aspects of their lessons with pupils and explore their level of understanding. Lessons are brisk and pupils are, in almost all cases, fully on task throughout. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are keen to talk about their work.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and provide effective support to help pupils learn. They are skilled at asking pertinent questions that encourage pupils to think for themselves and develop independence.
- The quality of marking has improved significantly since the previous inspection. There is much greater consistency in applying the school's marking policy, with the result that pupils are receiving regular feedback about their work. Pupils enjoy reading their teacher's comments and quickly respond to any suggestions about how they could improve their work.
- Classrooms are organised well with attractive displays that reflect current topics.
- The strong focus on improving the teaching of phonics is paying dividends as pupils' reading abilities quickly develop and they gain growing enjoyment from exposure to a wide range of books.
- Having successfully improved the quality of teaching phonics, leaders have turned their attention to improving the accuracy of pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling. A new policy has been developed and introduced with specific targets set for each year group. During the inspection, teachers were taking care to identify, through their marking, aspects of pupils' work that still needed improvement.
- Pupils are positive about the homework they receive. It is often linked to work being studied in the classroom and frequently involves practical activities, such as model-making and art, which they enjoy.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They talk positively about how friendly everyone is and the fact that bullying is not a problem. The school ensures that pupils know and understand the importance of staying safe. E-safety is a high priority. Pupils are knowledgeable about the importance of being vigilant when using computers and particularly the internet.
- All staff are extremely diligent about ensuring pupils' safety, especially when crossing pupils over the road between the two sites.

- Staff are fully informed about their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. They have all completed relevant safeguarding training and are vigilant to monitor any changes to pupils' welfare.
- Pupils' personal development is managed well. Staff have a good knowledge of pupils at the school. There is a strong, and appropriate, emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge of eating healthily and exercising regularly.
- Pupils joining the school part-way through their primary education settle quickly and begin to make good progress.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils are friendly, polite and respectful. They are proud of their school.
- Pupils get on well together, cooperating while working in the classroom and when playing at breaktimes. Positive relationships between staff and pupils ensure that the school has a lively learning feel. Pupils respond quickly to instructions, for example lining up at the end of breaks before entering classrooms in an orderly and respectful manner, ready to learn.
- Pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning and apply themselves sensibly with their work. Those pupils requiring extra support are helped to sustain their concentration so that learning is rarely disrupted.
- Pupils undertake their responsibilities well, for example as members of the school council and as house captains. From an early age, pupils are actively encouraged to develop their independence and self-reliance so that they take responsibility for their learning. They quickly learn to collect, return and care for equipment and resources that they use.
- Although pupils enjoy school, attendance levels remain slightly below the national average. Staff monitor pupils' attendance regularly to identify those at danger of falling behind with their work. When concerns are identified, the school endeavours to meet the families to explain the importance of regular attendance. This is a key reason why pupils' behaviour is not yet outstanding.

### Outcomes for pupils

### are good

- Pupils' achievement has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- From the moment children join the Reception Year there are high expectations for their achievement. This focus is helping greater numbers of Reception children to achieve a good level of development so that they are well prepared for the start of Year 1.
- Similarly, leaders' determination to improve the teaching of phonics is proving very successful. Teachers' routines are helping pupils to make good progress developing their use of phonics. As a result, far more pupils than before are reaching the standard expected in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Pupils' growing phonic understanding is helping to promote their reading skills and develop their enjoyment of books. Those pupils heard read were encouraged by the stimulating books they had been given. Pupils' reading records show that there is effective liaison between home and school.
- The improvements seen in the quality of teaching are helping pupils to make much faster progress than previously. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is now very close to the national average. At Key Stage 2, standards have risen for the last three years and in 2015 were broadly in line with the national average for reading, writing and mathematics.
- Despite these significant improvements, weaknesses in some pupils' English, grammar, punctuation and spelling remain. These findings illustrate the huge amount that the senior leaders have achieved during the past two years and confirm their view that more is required to entirely eliminate gaps in pupils' knowledge and use of language. No time has been wasted as leaders have already taken decisive action to improve the standard of pupils' writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well in all year groups. Many are making rapid progress and attaining standards in line with and above other pupils in the school and nationally.
- Teachers increasingly provide work that is suitably challenging for all ability groups. The most-able pupils are provided with activities that promote and deepen their knowledge and understanding. Similarly, less-able pupils are supported well with activities that meet their needs.
- Outcomes for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have been mixed. While some have achieved very well, others have not. The school has moved quickly to provide a more coherent

approach to managing their development. Through liaising with external agencies and other professionals, the school is rapidly improving the quality of support being provided. Inspection evidence and the school's tracking of pupils' progress show that this approach is already beginning to pay dividends.

## Early years provision

is good

- Leadership and management of the early years provision are good. Strong teamwork between all the adults is very evident, which benefits children's learning.
- Children starting school in the Reception Year often have skills that are lower than is typical for their age. This is most noticeable in relation to their language and communication skills.
- Children transfer happily from the on-site preschool and often start with the confidence and attitudes needed to enjoy school and learn well. The well-established links between families and school are key factors in boosting children's self-confidence, which helps them to adjust quickly to learning in a new environment.
- Very effective communication between the staff in both Reception classes supports the early identification of children's needs. Similarly, the very strong focus on strengthening the teaching of phonics and increasing the development of children's early reading skills is having a positive effect on quickening their progress.
- The organisation and layout of both classrooms provide children with a wide range of opportunities that help them to make good progress developing their early writing and mathematical skills. For example, children enjoyed writing and recording their ideas when describing pictures of fireworks.
- A key strength of the early years provision is the focus on helping children to take some responsibility for determining their own learning. This is very evident in the confident and productive manner with which children choose their own learning activities and signify their choice on the class 'planning board'.
- Children benefit from teaching that is consistently good, and sometimes very good. The staff know the children well. They assess and record the children's developing skills accurately. Children's learning journals provide strong evidence that the children are being suitably challenged and enthused by interesting activities.
- Although the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is slightly below average, the rate of improvement is faster than that seen nationally. From their starting points, children make good progress and do well.
- Despite the many positive features of the early years provision, the outdoor learning area has not been developed fully to support children in making even faster progress. However, the leaders know that they can overcome this issue in a few weeks' time when the school moves to its new building.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115520
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10004230

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	271
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Matt Bishop
<b>Headteacher</b>	Teresa Cross
<b>Telephone number</b>	01594 822311
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-whites.org">www.st-whites.org</a>
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11–12 December 2013

## Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school. Following the last inspection, the headteacher resigned and the school was led by an acting headteacher. During the last year, a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have been appointed to create a new leadership team.
- The early years provision comprises two classes for Reception children. There are a further nine classes catering for the other year groups, which include an additional classroom that opened in September 2015. Four newly qualified teachers joined the school at the start of the new academic year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standard set for the pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- While the school was in special measures, the headteacher of Severnbanks Primary School, a national leader of education, provided support to the school's leadership.
- The school moves to a newly constructed and purpose-built building in early spring 2016.
- An independently operated preschool operates from a classroom within St White's Primary School. This did not form part of this inspection.
- The school is an active member of the West Gloucestershire Partnership, which includes both primary and secondary schools in the Forest of Dean.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a wide range of lessons across the school. Many of the lessons were observed jointly with the school's senior leaders.
- When visiting lessons, inspectors looked at pupils' workbooks and reviewed teachers' marking. Inspectors also reviewed a sample of pupils' workbooks to evaluate their progress and the quality of their work.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan, policies, reports, information about pupils' progress and minutes of governing body meetings. Logbooks of pupils' behaviour, safety and welfare and the school's safeguarding records were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and many members of staff. They also met with six governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with pupils, heard some of them read and talked informally to pupils in the playground and around the school.
- The views of parents were considered through reviewing the 15 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke informally to parents at the school.

## Inspection team

Ken Buxton, lead inspector

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Rowena Green

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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