

Wharton Primary School

Rothwell Lane, Little Hulton, Worsley, Salford, Greater Manchester M38 9XA

Inspection dates

8–9 February 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school experienced considerable staffing difficulties over the previous two academic years. During this time, pupils' achievement plummeted across a number of year groups.
- Pupils' attendance declined dramatically in 2016. The school has allocated considerable staff time and resources to work with parents to improve attendance this year. There has been some improvement but attendance is still a long way from levels seen in 2015.
- Pupils' reading skills are improving. However, some pupils do not understand what they are reading well enough to support their learning in other subjects.
- Although teaching is much stronger this year, and good overall, there is still some inconsistency in what teachers expect of the most able pupils and the way teachers apply the school's marking and assessment policy.
- Much of the curriculum time is focused on improving pupils' personal development and their reading, writing and mathematical skills. There has been less focus on other subjects. Progress in these areas is currently slower.

The school has the following strengths

- Half of the current teachers are new to the school. They have settled very quickly. Overall, teachers are now doing a good job in helping pupils catch up quickly.
- The leadership team did all it could have been reasonably expected to achieve under the very difficult circumstances it experienced over the past two years. This year, leaders have demonstrated that they have good capacity to ensure teaching is effective. Pupils are safe and happy. Rates of progress are improving quickly.
- Over many years, children in the early years stage have made consistently good progress.
- All aspects of behaviour, apart from attendance, are very strong. Once in school, pupils are considerate and polite. There is an extremely positive culture throughout the school where both adults and pupils respect one another, and are tolerant and supportive.
- The school takes great care to ensure that pupils' emotional and social needs are met and this enables pupils to be in a good frame of mind to learn.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve rates of progress so that pupils leave school with standards at least as good as seen nationally, by:
 - further improving pupils' reading comprehension skills
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve are high enough and that they set work accordingly
 - ensuring that all teachers adhere to the school's expectations on how pupils' work is marked and how they are guided to improve
 - improving the progress that pupils make in subjects other than mathematics and English.
- Further reduce pupils' rates of absence by continuing to develop strategies that help parents improve the attendance of their children.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Over the last two years, the leadership team had to manage very challenging staffing problems. The school has found it difficult to recruit suitable candidates to teach in this school. Leaders have had to allocate considerable time to supporting some teachers who were weak. In addition, the school experienced unavoidable long-term absence of key teaching staff. The headteacher manages a considerable workload and had to continue to run the school and ensure that all pupils were safe, healthy and well looked after. The deputy headteacher had to leave her teacher improvement and support role to become a class teacher. This exhausted any capacity to support those teachers and pupils who were struggling. Consequently, pupils' achievement dropped quickly and significantly from the good levels seen in 2014.
- This year, recruitment has been much more successful and all classes are taught by teachers who the school considers to be good or quickly improving. There has been reorganisation of some leadership team responsibilities. The deputy headteacher has been able to return to supporting and developing teachers and some pupils. The school has an improvement plan that focuses sharply on improving pupils' achievement. The impact of these strategies is already being seen and pupils' progress is currently good. There is much good work being done in helping pupils catch up on work they missed out on.
- The headteacher has been instrumental in creating a highly positive culture. Pupils are very evidently happy and secure. All pupils are welcomed and all are given the support they need to develop and learn. Some parents have expressed concerns about the quality of some staff or communication. However, parents are pleased with the education now being provided for their children and they recognise the impact that the headteacher has had on improvements. They know she always makes decisions based on what is best for pupils. Parents also say that recent test results do not reflect the overall quality of the school.
- Additional funding that the school receives to support pupils who have special educational needs and /or disabilities is used effectively. A larger than usual proportion of children and pupils start this school with considerable social, emotional and behavioural needs. Many are also insecure or have low self-esteem. Leaders make extensive efforts to overcome these barriers to learning. Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants are highly successful in doing this. These pupils benefit considerably from additional support. They develop much more positive attitudes once in school, behave well and begin to progress quickly. Pupils who experience particularly challenging barriers to learning are given short, structured and specific support within the nurture group. This support is highly effective in ensuring that pupils improve quickly and are able to return to learning in their classes. A breakfast club run by the school provides good-quality time for pupils to eat properly before school, learn to socialise and prepare for the day. The school also offers an opportunity to some parents to attend a pre-school session with their two-year-old child once a week. The purpose of this is to help parents support their child's education. This aspect of the school's provision was not inspected. However, safeguarding arrangements were inspected and found to be secure. Parents who spoke to the lead inspector said the

school was very good at supporting them.

- Every week, all pupils attend a 'values assembly' on a particular value, such as 'care' or 'standing up for what's right'. Pupils are rewarded for displaying the value throughout the week. The school also discusses different family structures and people from other cultures with the pupils. In these ways, the school actively promotes British values and an understanding of the full range of diversity identified in the 2010 Equality Act.
- The headteacher has developed good systems to monitor the progress of pupils. This year, progress information is even sharper than last year. The senior leadership team know in detail and with great accuracy the strengths and weaknesses of every member of staff. They use this knowledge skilfully to improve the quality of teaching across the school. Teachers say that training to promote their professional development is very good. They can point to many examples where this has made an improvement to the quality of their teaching. The headteacher holds teachers to account for the progress of their pupils with rigour. Support systems are good. However, if a teacher fails to respond to support, the headteacher will take further action for the benefit of pupils.
- The additional funding which the school receives for sport and physical education is spent well and has enhanced pupils' enjoyment of physical education. Teachers have opportunities to learn how to improve their own practice by working with sports coaches. The funding also provides after-school sessions like fitness sessions and basketball.
- The additional funding which the school receives to support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is spent effectively and is carefully targeted on those individuals. Leaders make a careful analysis of the barriers that prevent disadvantaged pupils from learning well and provide them with an extensive range of support. In the past, disadvantaged pupils have not progressed as well as others nationally. However, this difference in performance is reducing for current pupils.
- Recently, a new coordinator has been appointed to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The identification of pupils' needs is accurate and support is tailored to individuals. Teachers are now given good advice and specific guidance on how to support these pupils.
- There are many aspects of learning and development that prepare pupils well for secondary school. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Their personal development is strong. However, when pupils have left this school, their basic skills in literacy and numeracy have been weaker than seen nationally. This is improving for current pupils. The curriculum is broad and balanced. However, in subjects other than English and mathematics pupils do not develop skills in sufficient depth to enable them to make a good start in their next school. In the past, pupils have not been well enough prepared for secondary school, but this is improving quickly.

Governance of the school

- Members of the governing body are passionate about providing a high-quality primary education for their community. They are frequent visitors to the school and give good support to it. This was particularly evident during the difficulties the school experienced

in recent years. They carry out their duties diligently.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Systems to protect pupils are very secure. This is because relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. Pupils' welfare and care are at the heart of what the school does very well. Staff are vetted rigorously. Staff training on safeguarding is very good. Even the newest of staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and procedures they should follow. All staff know what to look for and how to react to ensure that pupils are safe.
- The site is secure.
- The school is rigorous and efficient in following up pupils' absences to ensure that they are safe. This includes children who might go missing from education. Leaders demonstrate tenacity in following up concerns and ensuring that other agencies play their part.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved considerably this year and is now good. It has improved because the school has been able to make some very good appointments of teachers. This year, leaders have also had time to support teachers. Those teachers who are newly or recently qualified are developing well.
- All teachers are very familiar with the capabilities and prior learning of their pupils. Most teachers use this knowledge to set high expectations of how quickly pupils should learn and also to provide learning activities that match their needs. Some teachers do not set high enough expectations for the most able pupils in their class and so the tasks set for them can be too easy.
- The school has drawn up a policy on how teachers should mark pupils' work so that pupils can learn from this and improve their achievement. Most teachers follow this requirement. However, not all do so. Therefore, their pupils do not get good enough advice on how to improve.
- Leaders now ensure that many aspects of teaching are more consistently applied by staff and improve learning. Teachers tend to use a wide range of good-quality resources and plan interesting learning activities. This helps pupils to concentrate and enjoy their learning.
- Teachers use questioning well to help pupils think more deeply. Rewards are frequent and motivating. Class routines are firmly established, so pupils know what to do and do not waste time. Pupils support each other and will discuss their topics. Homework is interesting and set regularly.
- The most important factor in improving pupils' achievement is that they now experience high-quality teaching, day in and day out.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- School leaders are acutely aware that they have to promote pupils' physical and emotional well-being before pupils begin to learn well. This aspect of the school's work is very strong.
- Pupils are taught to care for one another, and they do this successfully. Pupils are also taught well how to be safe in all aspects of their lives, including when using social media or out and about in the community. Pupils know who they can turn to if they have a personal concern or are concerned about another pupil.
- Pupils' personal development is enhanced through high expectations, excellent role models set by staff, day-to-day activities, an excellent range of enrichment activities, and opportunities to take on responsibility for various aspects of school life. Leaders and teachers find something for everyone to do, to help them develop their confidence and positive attitudes. Older pupils take part in the SkillForce Junior Prince's Award. This develops their resilience as well as developing their leadership and teamwork skills. Pupils organise money-raising events for charities. They are currently excited about their 'big walk' to the top of their local fell. Pupils also describe many activities they enjoy and benefit from. These include sporting activities, competitions, creative writing and singing. Rewards play a significant role in reinforcing positive attitudes and good learning. All pupils take part with great enthusiasm in a structured accumulation of rewards which culminates in a highly desirable token for a high street store.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- School leaders, teachers and other adults develop pupils' very good behaviour through their example, rewards and setting high expectations. They ensure that pupils develop a high moral code.
- Around the school, in corridors and in the playground pupils behave very well. There is a sense of harmony around the school. Pupils play well together and, when inside the school, they are calm and orderly.
- In lessons, pupils show a keenness to learn. They work hard and respond well to teachers and other adults. Some boys' work is untidy but when teachers challenge this their work improves. Pupils are keen to answer questions and are generally proud of their work.
- Pupils who need extra help to behave receive very effective support. This enables them to socialise well and engage positively with their work.
- Pupils say there is no bullying in school. Records of serious misbehaviour confirm this. The number of recorded racist incidents is very low and reflects the excellent work the school does to promote tolerance and understanding.
- Pupils' rates of absence increased dramatically during 2015 and 2016. Leaders are

unclear about why this was, but say many parents took their children on holiday during term time. This in itself, however, cannot account for such a dramatic decline in attendance. During 2016 the school introduced an extensive range of strategies to improve attendance. Most of these involved working with parents because when the pupils attend school, they are happy and enjoy being in school. Last term, attendance figures showed no sign of improving. However, they were adversely affected by a small number of pupils who left school without their parents informing the local authority for four weeks. Analysing attendance information without including those pupils shows a 0.5% improvement. Another 2% increase will be needed to return attendance rates to the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because, over time, they have been weak. Significantly better teaching has improved achievement quickly across the school and across subjects. However, the most improvement is currently seen in pupils' achievement in mathematics and English.
- In 2015, results of national tests showed the achievement of pupils in Year 6 was weak. In 2016, achievement in many classes was weak. This was particularly evident in key stage 2. Pupils left school with low standards in all subjects, including English and mathematics.
- For some years, leaders had a concern about the quality of the teaching of writing and targeted this for improvement. As a result of effective strategies to improve writing, standards improved and in 2015 and 2016 they were the strongest element of pupils' work. Leaders now closely monitor pupils' progress and so quickly noticed that writing began to dip in the first term of this year. They identified that this was because a large number of new staff had not been trained to teach writing well. Leaders implemented very effective training and rates of progress in writing have improved quickly.
- There is a clear school policy on how to develop pupils' phonic skills. Teachers and teaching assistants follow this programme faithfully. Reading is improving across the school. While pupils can read words and sentences well, they are less competent at understanding what they have read. This has a negative effect on their learning across subjects, because sometimes pupils do not fully understand what they are supposed to learn or do.
- Achievement across year groups has improved this year because pupils are being well taught. Leaders are able to monitor the progress of pupils and quality of teaching frequently. They use information gained from these activities very well to pinpoint pupils who are not progressing as well as they should. Leaders introduce short and well-targeted additional work with experienced teachers or teaching assistants that help these pupils catch up quickly.
- Pupils currently in Year 6 are progressing rapidly because they receive very skilled teaching and high-quality additional support.
- Pupils in key stage 1 have tended to progress more quickly than those in key stage 2 because teaching has been stronger. Currently, pupils progress well, particularly the most able and middle-ability learners. Low-ability learners tend to be too dependent on

their support staff. This slows their progress when they are required to work independently. Pupils' starting points in Year 1 are low so, despite some good progress, they do not reach standards seen nationally at the end of Year 2. The phonics check at the end of Year 1 shows a large difference between the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in this school and nationally. By the end of Year 2, the proportion meeting the standard is much closer to that seen nationally.

- The progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving. Their needs are identified accurately. Guidance given to teachers is specific and helpful. Teachers adapt learning activities for these pupils to meet their needs well. Rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils do not yet match national rates for other pupils. However, they are getting closer. From their starting points, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving and similar to others in the school.

Early years provision

Good

- The school's early years provision has been consistently good for some time.
- Children start in the Nursery with low development in communication and language, in their personal and social skills, and in their emotional and physical development. By the time they leave Reception, their development has not caught up with that of other children nationally. However, they have made good progress and about half of the children have reached what is considered to be a good level of development for their age.
- Teaching is effective and the early years staff are experienced, enthusiastic and committed. They know their children's needs in detail and, together, plan good learning activities. These activities are matched accurately to what children need to learn or be able to do. The indoor environment is bright and stimulating. This excites children and encourages them to investigate their world. They are often keen to tell someone what they have discovered. This accelerates their communication and social skills. Although the outdoor space is suitable, it does not provide the same stimulation as the indoor area does. There are fewer permanent resources that help children gain an early grasp of literacy and numeracy.
- Children learn how to behave well early in Wharton Primary School. Staff are always quick to acknowledge or reward good behaviour. They use a range of subtle, yet effective, strategies to help children modify any poor behaviour. Children learn quickly what good behaviour is and what is not acceptable. They also quickly learn how to socialise and care for each other. All staff are vigilant in monitoring children's well-being. If staff have any concerns they will, without delay, consult with colleagues. Collectively, they will decide on the most appropriate action and because action is usually taken early, problems are resolved quickly.
- There is a strong team culture in the early years. All strive to improve the provision and staff work well together to drive improvements. Areas of responsibility and lines of accountability are clear, leading to a good leadership structure right through to the headteacher.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 105897 |
| Local authority | Salford |
| Inspection number | 10024170 |

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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 286 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Lesley Hopwood-Ryan |
| Headteacher | Helen Watson |
| Telephone number | 0161 790 4473 |
| Website | www.whartonprimary.co.uk |
| Email address | helen.watson@salford.gov.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 24–25 October 2012 |

Information about this school

- Numbers of pupils on the school roll are increasing. The school currently accepts up to 60 pupils per year group from Reception to Year 2. This expansion will continue into other year groups. The school is larger than average. The local authority will build additional classrooms on the school site during the summer holidays.
- There has been a considerable number of staff changes since Easter 2016.
- The proportion of pupils attending the school who have minority ethnic heritage, or who speak English as an additional language, is increasing. These proportions are now broadly average.
- About half of the pupils on roll are considered to be disadvantaged and this is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.

- The breakfast club is managed by the learning mentor, support staff and volunteers.
- The school runs a pre-school group for a small number of families.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and a group of staff. They met with a group of parents and spoke to parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors also met with groups of pupils, and two members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- School documents were scrutinised including: safeguarding checks; information about pupils' achievement; and records of checks on the quality of teaching. Inspectors also visited classrooms with leaders to speak with pupils, look at their books and observe their learning.
- Inspectors examined child protection information, procedures and practice.
- Inspectors considered 24 responses to the online questionnaire for parents. They took account of responses from three pupils and 16 staff to inspection surveys. Inspectors considered the views of the 20 parents who texted their comments.

Inspection team

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Neil Mackenzie, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Gary Bevin | Ofsted Inspector |
| Doreen Davenport | Ofsted Inspector |
| Joan Williamson | Ofsted Inspector |

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