

Wharton Primary School

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

Inspection dates

25–26 June 2019

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the last inspection, the actions taken by the headteacher and governors have improved outcomes for pupils.
- Governors have established a strong senior leadership team with complementary skills and high levels of expertise.
- An effective, and now stable, team of teachers works very well with skilled teaching assistants to ensure that learning is enjoyable and that pupils make good progress.
- Staff generate positive relationships with pupils and manage behaviour very well. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in lessons and at social times.
- Pupils are keen ambassadors for equality and diversity in all their forms. The school celebrates difference of every type from the first day of Nursery to the last day of Year 6.
- An increasing number of pupils join the school at other than the usual times. Some of these pupils speak English as an additional language and some have had no previous experience of school. Staff ensure that they settle in well and help them to catch up with their classmates.
- Well-planned cross-curricular links have enabled leaders to prioritise English and mathematics while giving pupils opportunities to develop skills across all the subjects of the national curriculum.
- A strong programme of education for building character gives pupils valuable skills for life. Staff have taught them how to be resilient, to stay healthy and keep safe from harm.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well organised. Pupils' needs are identified early and good support from skilled staff allows them to reach their full potential.
- The early years is well led. Children enjoy learning and playing and make good progress from their varying starting points and times of entry to the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils in the school, especially at key stage 1, make less academic progress than non-disadvantaged pupils across the country. However, this difference is diminishing.
- Despite the efforts of staff, too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. The school's attendance remains below the national average for primary schools.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes, by ensuring that:
 - the spending of the pupil premium funding is focused on the specific barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils
 - actions related to disadvantaged pupils are rigorously evaluated to determine their effectiveness in improving the academic progress of this group.
- Work with families and outside agencies to improve pupils' attendance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher and governors have acted to improve pupils' progress and attainment. Staff fully support the changes made and have implemented them with enthusiasm and skill.
- The headteacher works very effectively with her strong senior leadership team. Senior leaders bring complementary skills and experience across early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- The headteacher has a very detailed knowledge of strengths and weaknesses in all areas of the school. With the senior leadership team, she uses this well to plan for continuing improvement. The good quality of the school's improvement planning has played a significant role in the positive developments seen since the last inspection.
- Planning for the spending of the pupil premium funding is less effective. The barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils face have not been identified with enough precision. As a result, actions have not been targeted sufficiently well at the needs of this group as a whole or at the individuals within it.
- Leaders have created a highly inclusive school in which everyone is made to feel welcome. Pupils told inspectors that nobody uses discriminatory language in relation to race, religion, culture or sexuality. The school has an ethos of warmth, humour and positive relationships.
- As the school's number on roll grows, more and more pupils enter at other than the usual times. Some of these pupils speak English as an additional language and some have come from other countries and have never experienced school. A number come with a history of poor attendance and behaviour from other schools. Leaders ensure that all settle in quickly and adapt to Wharton's expectations, and are supported in catching up with their peers.
- The provision for pupils with SEND is very effective. Leaders involve parents and carers, and external specialists in the identification of pupils' needs. Well-planned support in class, in small withdrawal groups and in one-to-one sessions, meets the learning needs of individuals.
- The quality of teaching is regularly monitored by curriculum leaders for each subject and by senior leaders who are linked to several subjects. Leaders have used a wide range of monitoring activities, including lesson observation and the scrutiny of pupils' work, to form an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of individual teachers and the school as a whole. They have used this information well to continue to improve teaching.
- A strong programme of in-house and external training has contributed to the school's improvement. Staff and leaders benefit from the sharing of good practice via a collaborative network of local schools. Performance management has been used well by leaders and governors to improve the quality of teaching. Newly qualified teachers are very well supported and monitored. They are given a very good start to their career.

- The school's curriculum is devised well. Efficiently mapped cross-curricular links are evident in pupils' books, in lessons and in schemes of learning. These enable teachers to reinforce skills and knowledge regularly. They also enable them to prioritise literacy and numeracy, as well as developing subject-specific skills across the full range of subjects of the national curriculum.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities attended by pupils from Year 2 upwards. These include a range of sports, baking and crafts.
- Leaders have spent the physical education (PE) and sport premium well to provide specialist coaches who teach pupils and provide models for staff to use to develop their own skills in teaching PE. There is now a wider range of sports available and more pupils participate in extra-curricular sport and competitions with other schools. This grant has also enabled leaders to provide better resources for the teaching of PE.
- Salford local authority funds an experienced school improvement partner who provides an external perspective. She knows the school well and has written detailed and useful reports that have informed self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Governance of the school

- Members of the governing body bring a range of relevant skills to their role, including educational, financial and business expertise. They fulfil all statutory responsibilities and understand the part they play in safeguarding pupils and staff.
- Governors are reflective and know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They share the headteacher's clear vision for the school and support her in implementing it.
- Minutes of governors' meetings show that they ask detailed questions of the school's leaders, particularly in relation to pupils' progress and attendance. The linking of individual governors to the curriculum and other areas enhances their ability to challenge and support the school's leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, including governors, have established a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Working with the local authority, the school checks the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. Staff are trained to recognise signs of abuse and neglect and to protect them from extremism and radicalisation.
- Staff know how to report any concerns about the welfare of pupils. Working with outside agencies ensures that pupils receive specialist help if they need it. The actions that leaders take are well considered and efficiently recorded.
- Teachers show pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. Pupils say that they feel safe in the school and their parents and carers agree.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers use their good knowledge of the subjects they teach to plan logical sequences of activities that build on prior learning and promote good progress. Their subject knowledge also enables them to frame questions that stretch the most able and help those who are struggling to understand.
- Teaching is well planned, so that activities match pupils' prior attainment and capabilities. Teachers give the most able pupils challenging tasks that stretch them. Teachers and teaching assistants adapt materials to help the least able to reach their full potential. Expectations of all are high. In mathematics, all pupils are frequently engaged in problem-solving and reasoning tasks. In English, all pupils are expected to use increasingly sophisticated vocabulary and sentence structures.
- Preparation for internal and external competitions, such as the local Maths Challenge, contributes to pupils' keenness to undertake work of a high standard. Competitors were keen to talk to inspectors about their successes.
- The school's policy of immediate feedback on work during lessons allows teachers to identify quickly if a pupil is falling behind, not working hard enough or has misunderstood. In addition, those pupils who need help are identified by detailed and timely assessments. Staff help them, either in class or in small withdrawal groups, and they soon catch up.
- Teachers' good classroom organisation and management of behaviour ensure that lessons proceed with little or no interruption so that learning time is maximised. They make sure that activities are interesting, so that pupils enjoy learning and are keen to do well.
- From early years to Year 6, teachers encourage pupils to work at home. This ranges from reading to an adult to learning spellings and conducting research. Pupils and parents told inspectors that this helps to consolidate what pupils have learned in school.
- Teachers make sure that pupils' knowledge of grammar, spelling and punctuation is used well in all subjects and that the standard of their English is as good in subjects such as geography and history as it is in their English books. Pupils' knowledge of mathematics is reinforced in subjects such as science and geography.
- Teachers and teaching assistants, especially in early years and key stage 1, are skilled at teaching reading and phonics. They carefully build on pupils' prior knowledge and move them on quickly when appropriate. Across the school, the new system of guided reading is popular with staff and pupils and is raising reading standards even further. The school's strategies give pupils the confidence and skills to read unfamiliar words and to enjoy challenging books.
- Learning resources and teaching celebrate differences in race, culture, religion and lifestyles.
- Parents receive regular information about all aspects of their children's life at school, including their academic progress.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- In the school's mission statement, leaders express their aim for pupils to have 'the confidence, ambition and basic skills to set them on the path to be lifelong learners'. To this end, the curriculum addresses areas that may otherwise be lacking in pupils' lives.
- A strong feature of the school is the emphasis on 'character education'. Working extensively with an outside provider, pupils gain accreditation such as the Prince William Award and the Prince's Award. These schemes develop skills such as resilience, leadership and self-belief, as well as accreditation in first-aid and navigation.
- The taught curriculum, assemblies, themed days and contributions from visitors aim to ensure that pupils leave primary school ready to enjoy life in a modern and diverse Britain. Pupils spoke to inspectors knowledgeably about, and with respect for, people of different races, cultures, religions and sexuality from their own.
- Pupils know the devastating effects that bullying can have on an individual. They are confident that it does not happen in their school and trust the school's staff to prevent it or deal with it should it ever happen.
- Pupils feel safe in the school and have been taught how to keep themselves safe from physical and emotional harm.
- Personal, social and health education is woven through the curriculum. Pupils know how to eat healthily and they know the value of exercise.
- Sports coaches play an important role in helping pupils who find it difficult to follow rules or take turns.
- The school council, eco-council and well-being council allow pupils to see democracy and citizenship in action and to undertake responsibilities. Pupils choose which charities to support and have recently spent time with vulnerable adults playing cards and dancing. As 'playground buddies', older pupils help younger ones to socialise and play.
- Most pupils have good attitudes to learning. In class, they are keen to answer and they take pride in the presentation and accuracy of their work. They enjoy working collaboratively to share thoughts and ideas. They listen to each other and help each other. A minority need reminding to pay attention and work to the best of their ability.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The consistent application of the school's well-devised behaviour policy contributes to pupils conducting themselves well at social times and in lessons. They respond positively to behaviour rewards, including afternoon tea with the headteacher. Inspectors saw teachers using the system of sanctions well to prevent silly behaviour in class when a minority of pupils lost concentration.
- Teachers and support staff, including playground supervisors, have undertaken training

in behaviour management. This has increased their skills and confidence. A small number of pupils have effective one-to-one support for their behavioural needs. This helps them to listen attentively and follow instructions.

- At times, the school has used short fixed-term exclusions when a minority of pupils did not respond to other sanctions. The parents of these pupils agreed with the school's actions. This strategy was effective and nobody was excluded more than once. This year, the number of exclusions has decreased considerably.
- Pupils' attendance has been below the national average for primary schools for at least three years. This year, attendance has improved slightly, particularly for those whose attendance is below 90%. The school's overall attendance rate is negatively affected by a small number of pupils who are still on roll but do not attend at all. The school is working with the local authority to resolve this issue and ensure that all pupils have a continuous education.
- Leaders, teachers and support staff work hard with pupils and their families to emphasise the importance of attending school. They use a range of rewards for good or improving attendance. They also use all the sanctions available to them, including fines. Case studies show that, for a considerable number of individual pupils, the school has improved attendance significantly.
- The difference between the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and that of their peers has diminished this year. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance almost matches that of others in the school.
- Some absence from school is related to pupils arriving beyond the time when they can be counted as present on the register. To address this, the school provides a free breakfast club. Some pupils are collected from home for the breakfast club by staff and consequently arrive at lessons on time and ready to learn.
- To improve attendance, staff work closely with an educational welfare officer provided by the local authority. Recently, the school appointed a part-time attendance officer of its own, who is in the process of making relationships with individual families.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Published results for key stage 2 show that over the last three years, pupils' progress improved in reading and mathematics. In 2018, progress in reading was in the top 20% of all schools nationally. Progress in mathematics has improved and is now broadly in line with that made by pupils nationally. Pupils' progress in writing continued to be in the top 40% of all schools in England.
- In key stage 1, published results show that pupils' attainment was lower than the national average at the expected level and at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. Taking account of the proportion of pupils who did not spend the whole of early years at the school and began Year 1 with skills below what is typical for their age, this attainment represents good progress.
- In 2018, the small number of most-able pupils made the most progress across both key stages in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' attainment at the higher standard and greater depth was in line with, or almost in line with, national averages.

- The majority of pupils achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2018. Although the proportion of pupils achieving this standard was lower than the national average, proportions have risen over the past three years. The average score of those who did not achieve the expected standard is also rising.
- Pupils enjoy reading the wide variety of books provided by the school. They read aloud with confidence, fluency and accuracy appropriate for their age and capabilities. They are aware if they have made mistakes and correct themselves. All pupils show understanding of the basic information in a text and many use inference and deduction to understand the finer details.
- In key stages 1 and 2, current pupils of all abilities and starting points are making better progress than previously in English and mathematics. They are also developing good subject-specific skills across the curriculum in areas such as science, geography and history.
- At key stage 1, most pupils' letter formation and handwriting improve to a good standard by the end of Year 2. They use their knowledge of phonics, grammar, punctuation and spelling increasingly well in their writing across the curriculum.
- At key stage 2, pupils use an increasingly wide range of vocabulary and sentence structure to make their writing interesting and varied. Their writing increases in length as they move up the school and they use more and more styles and genres.
- In mathematics, pupils are expected to use reasoning and problem solving from Year 1. As they move up the school, they apply mathematics more and more in real-life situations as their use of basic and more complicated mathematical operations becomes more automatic to them.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their varying starting points.
- In 2018, disadvantaged pupils continued to make less progress than their non-disadvantaged peers in the school and across the country. However, the difference is now diminishing, particularly at key stage 2.
- Leaders have made sure that Year 6 pupils are well prepared to go to secondary school. A wide range of transition events, including visits to secondary schools and visits from secondary school leaders, has made pupils confident about the next stage in their lives. They told inspectors that they were looking forward to moving on and had no fears.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the school's Nursery with skills below what is typical for their age. This is particularly true of language, communication and social skills. The needs of individuals, including those with SEND, are assessed, and teaching and pastoral support across Nursery and Reception are planned well to address them. As a result, children make good progress from low starting points. The percentage of children attending the school's Nursery who achieve a good level of development at the end of Reception is higher than the national average.
- Half of the children who enter Reception have not attended the school's Nursery. Baseline assessments show that, across the range of areas of learning, they arrive with

skills below what is typical for their age. Some of these children have recently come to England from other countries and/or speak English as an additional language. Staff are quick to make them feel happy and welcome. Good teaching and nurture ensure that they make good progress. However, their low starting points mean that most start Year 1 without having achieved a good level of development.

- Across early years, there is a high level of pastoral care for vulnerable children, including those new to England and to school life.
- The early years leader has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses and effectively plans for continuing improvement. This year, she introduced slightly more formal approaches to the teaching of literacy and numeracy, which have improved children's understanding and use of letters, words and numbers. The teaching of phonics is well planned and delivered.
- The thematic curriculum is effectively organised and monitored for its contribution to all areas of learning, including speech and language and mathematics. It enables the most able to be challenged.
- Teachers and support staff use questioning and conversation to develop pupils' skills and understanding. Children spoke confidently to inspectors about what they were doing.
- Staff use the well-resourced dedicated indoor and outdoor spaces well to make learning enjoyable and meaningful.
- The involvement of parents in their children's school life is strong. The parents who spoke to inspectors said that early years staff are approachable and supportive and keep them well informed.
- Ongoing assessments of all areas of learning are recorded using a digital portfolio that is accessible to parents and allows them to see how their children are progressing. Parents are encouraged to reinforce at home what has been learned at school. Teachers use the portfolio well to track children's progress.
- The atmosphere in Nursery and Reception is settled and purposeful. Children become increasingly confident and independent. They anticipate and enjoy well-established routines such as tidying away and getting ready for playtime.
- The same high standards of welfare and safeguarding seen in the rest of the school are also apparent in early years.
- Celebration of difference begins in Nursery. The curriculum, teaching and resources reflect Britain's diverse population and culture.

School details

Unique reference number	105897
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10087824

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	356
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Allen
Headteacher	Helen Watson
Telephone number	0161 790 4473
Website	www.whartonprimary.co.uk
Email address	helen.watson@salford.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 February 2017

Information about this school

- Wharton Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is almost four times higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for SEND is high in comparison with the national figure.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is less than one third of the average for primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not or is believed not to be English is half the national average for primary schools.
- Staff work in collaboration with other schools via The Primary Improvement Network.

- Salford local authority provides a school improvement partner.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe teaching and pupils' learning.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's baseline assessments of children when they started Nursery and Reception.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to pupils during lessons and at playtimes.
- Inspectors met formally with two groups of pupils. An inspector heard a range of pupils read.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff, middle and senior leaders, members of the governing body and the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding. They took account of the school's information about pupils' outcomes and scrutinised pupils' books and assessment information.
- Inspectors considered 49 responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire), including 25 free-text comments. They also considered 29 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Liz Kelly, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Lucas	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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