

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Whitstable Junior School

Oxford Street, Whitstable, Kent CT5 1DB

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 April 2025

Outcome

Whitstable Junior School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. They feel happy and safe. New pupils settle in quickly, including those joining at different times of the year or at different stages of their learning. The school cares deeply for pupils and prioritises their well-being. Pastoral support is highly effective. Pupils know that if they have any worries, staff are on hand to listen and talk to them. They also enjoy spending time with the school dog Nancy.

The school's values weave through every aspect of school life. Pupils talk positively about the quality of education they enjoy and the experiences they gain as part of school life. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn well alongside their classmates. Pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to their learning. They welcome visitors politely and enthusiastically.

The school recognises that pupils did not achieve as well in mathematics as they could have in the 2024 national curriculum tests. Leaders have acted decisively to address this to ensure pupils have the mathematical knowledge they need.

A broad range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities are deliberately planned into the curriculum. Pupils take on responsibilities that help others. Peer mediators help resolve feelings of upset at breaktime and lunchtime.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious. Pupils are typically taught well by staff who have sound subject knowledge. Staff know what pupils should learn in each subject and year. Recently, standards in mathematics have been lower than in previous years. The school has focused on delivering staff training. This has improved staff's expertise. Mathematics is now taught effectively, and standards in mathematics are improving.

Staff teach subjects with enthusiasm and explain new learning clearly. Staff feel well supported in delivering the curriculum. They understand that the changes made to the curriculum are in the best interests of the pupils and their learning. However, the expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistent. The checks on pupils' understanding do not always identify when some are ready to move on to the next stage of learning. Some pupils have unnoticed gaps in their knowledge. This results in learning activities that are either too easy or too hard. In these instances, some pupils do not learn as much as they could.

Reading is a priority across the school. Pupils who find reading difficult are provided with effective support and opportunities to practise. This improves their confidence and fluency. Pupils enjoy the stories they read in class. They make links from these stories to learning in other subjects.

The school identifies pupils with SEND quickly. It works well with external agencies to identify ways to best support these pupils in their learning. Most pupils with SEND receive effective support from well-trained staff who know and understand their needs well.

Most pupils behave well. They are encouraged to make positive choices and manage their own behaviour. There are spaces around the school for pupils who need additional support to manage their feelings or need space to reflect.

Improving pupils' attendance is a high priority for the school. The school works with individual families, where necessary, to address any barriers to regular attendance. It provides a range of morning activities to help pupils settle at the start of the day. This nurturing approach in school has been particularly successful for helping pupils with SEND to thrive.

The school's personal development programme helps pupils to find out about a wide range of important themes, including staying safe online. There is an impressive range of opportunities to enhance learning, including visits to museums and historical sites. Pupils experience an array of different clubs, including glee club, animation club, craft club and a wide range of sports.

The school is ambitious for all its pupils, and leaders act in the best interest of pupils. School governors take a keen interest in how well pupils learn. They use their extensive skills to offer support and challenge to school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistent. The work given to pupils does not always give them opportunities to develop deeper thinking. As a result, some pupils do not produce work that is of a high quality. The school needs to ensure that all staff have ambitious expectations and that the work given to pupils ensures they can achieve as much as they could across the curriculum.
- Some teaching is not adapted to respond to any misconceptions or gaps in pupils' learning. As a result, some pupils have gaps in what they know and remember. The school needs to ensure that teachers have the expertise to assess accurately where pupils have gaps and address them promptly across the curriculum.

Background

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

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

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

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	118364
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341485
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	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	James Gerard Smith
Headteacher	Sarah Kent
Website	www.whitstable-junior.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- Since the school's last inspection, a new headteacher has taken up post.
- The school runs its own before-school provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and senior leaders and a representative from the local governing board.

- To evaluate the quality of education, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils and teachers, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke with several groups of pupils and considered pupils' opinions expressed through Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- A range of documents were reviewed, including school development plans, behaviour logs, attendance records, minutes of governors' meetings and school policies.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. She also spoke informally with pupils, staff, and parents around the school.

Inspection team

Sam Johnson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025