

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Whitehall Infant School

Cowley Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 2LX

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 November 2024

Outcome

Whitehall Infant School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this warm and caring school. Staff and parents and carers talk fondly of the welcoming family feel. Strong relationships underpin this convivial atmosphere. Learning to share and be kind starts from the Nursery class. Pupils and staff show respect and courtesy to one another, guided by the school's 'FRESH' values. These values drive decision-making and ensure pupils' interests are at the heart of all that leaders do.

The school is determined all pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. It realises these ambitions by supporting staff to deliver a broad and exciting curriculum. Pupils respond by concentrating well in lessons and applying themselves to their work. To complement the curriculum, pupils benefit from leadership opportunities in school and exciting trips and visits outside of school.

The school has equally high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Routines, such as for walking around the school and lining up after breaktime, are well established. Pupils quickly learn to follow them. For example, when playtime ends, pupils stop immediately on the given signal and walk sensibly to their lines. This creates a calm and purposeful atmosphere conducive to learning.

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

The school has ensured that the curriculum is well sequenced. Teachers' secure understanding of the curriculum helps pupils to know more and remember more over time as knowledge is broken down into manageable chunks.

The school prioritises reading. There is a concerted drive to ensure that all children become fluent readers. Pupils are helped to acquire phonics knowledge in a timely

manner. Staff regularly check how well pupils are learning phonics. Any pupils in danger of falling behind receive additional interventions to help them keep up. Right from the Nursery class, children are encouraged to develop a love of books. As children learn to read, they take books home that are carefully matched to the sounds they know. The school's focus on securing pupils' early handwriting skills is not as effective. For instance, staff do not correct children who are holding pencils incorrectly in a consistent manner. There is not a concerted focus on ensuring all children form letters correctly. This means some children continue to shape letters poorly and use a grip that prevents them from writing at length and with fluency.

Mathematics is a strength of the school. In early years, children have taught sessions, as well as numerous opportunities to reinforce mathematical concepts within continuous provision. For example, children independently measured finger spaces on their lengthy play dough snakes. In key stage 1, new mathematics learning builds on pupils' existing knowledge. This is presented in a clear way that isolates key ideas. Activities ensure pupils practise these new ideas, applying their cumulative learning. Teachers quickly assess how well pupils are assimilating this new knowledge and move them on to more challenging work where appropriate.

Support for pupils with SEND is effective. Teachers are adept at providing adaptations that meet pupils' needs. For example, during a mathematics lesson, one group went outside to do a more physical activity to help them understand how to break numbers into constituent parts. Similarly, where pupils find it hard to record their thoughts in writing, staff use a range of ways to support them.

Pupils behave impeccably around the school. Playtimes are convivial, and pupils play together harmoniously. There is a really calm, friendly atmosphere at lunchtime, with pupils chatting as they eat. Their behaviour in the singing assembly was exceptional, all joining in gleefully. The school's concerted actions ensured attendance improved considerably last year, and this has been sustained. Staff analyse attendance data carefully and work with families to understand any barriers to regular attendance. In this way, they are able to offer targeted and effective help.

The school has a comprehensive programme for personal development. The school council introduces pupils to the concept of voting. There are other roles for pupils such as eco-warriors, healthy ambassadors and playground buddies. These give pupils a sense of responsibility. Respecting the views of others is a key message pupils are taught. This helps prepare pupils well for life beyond the school, including transitioning to junior school.

Leaders' actions are effective and continue to build on their successes. Staff are very positive about working at this school. They feel that their professional development needs are well met. Leaders take into account staff workload when making decisions. Staff appreciate this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There has not been a concerted focus on ensuring children develop the correct pencil grip and learn to form letters correctly. This means some children find it hard when they begin to write words and sentences. The school needs to ensure that all children receive consistent support to develop their writing skills securely as early as possible so they develop into confident writers.

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 March 2015.

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	102411
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10345803
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jacqueline Clarke and Susan Watts (Co-Chairs)
Headteacher	Manjit Bringan
Website	www.whitehall-inf.hillingdon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The school manages its own breakfast club.

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 held discussions with the school's senior leaders, a group of governors and staff. She also had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning, listened to pupils' reading and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school, in assembly, at playtime and in the lunch hall.
- The inspector met with parents at the school gate. She also took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments, as well as the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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