

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Whitecliffe Academy

Mill Lane, Carlin How, Saltburn-By-The-Sea, North Yorkshire TS13 4AD

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Inspection dates:

4 March 2025

## Outcome

Whitecliffe Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Robert Cole. This school is part of Northern Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Rob Tarn CBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Sanders OBE. There is also an executive principal, Sara McCallum, who is responsible for this school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Whitecliffe Academy is aspirational and nurturing. The school has the interest of pupils and the local community at the heart of all they do. Pupils flourish here.

The school has instilled a culture of praise and recognition. 'Applause moments' and 'Whitecliffe wizards' celebrate pupils' contributions to lessons. Pupils are motivated to try hard and be their best throughout the day. Pupils love celebrating each other's achievements. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Right from the early years, pupils play and work well together.

The school has high ambition for its pupils. Children make a strong start in the early years. The two-year-old and Nursery provision prepares children well for their time in the Reception Year. Pupils benefit from the well-designed curriculum, which meets the needs of the mixed-age classes. As a result, pupils achieve well.

The school ensures pupils have a wide range of experiences beyond the classroom. Pupils value these. They learn how to keep themselves safe in the community and when using the internet. The 'Find out Friday' sessions share key safety messages with parents and carers. This helps pupils to be well prepared for life beyond school.

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

The school has clearly identified the important knowledge, vocabulary and skills pupils need to be successful. It carefully considers the starting points of pupils when they join the school.

The school's systems to check that pupils have a secure understanding of what they learn are well embedded. Staff regularly check pupils' understanding during lessons. This means that, in most subjects, pupils' misconceptions are quickly noticed and addressed. Pupils have regular opportunities to revisit prior learning. This helps them to remember important knowledge and skills. The school carefully checks pupils' progress. The systems to help pupils keep up with their learning are highly effective. Pupils receive timely and effective support when they need it. This means pupils rarely fall behind.

The school partners closely with parents and external agencies to identify when pupils may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school prioritises this as part of effective transition arrangements. As a result, adults know pupils and their needs well. However, occasionally, tasks are not well adapted for some pupils with SEND, which means they become too reliant on adult support. This can hinder the achievement of these pupils and limit their independence.

Reading is a priority throughout school. Pupils learn to read quickly and fluently. Children are well prepared to begin learning to read as soon as they start in the Reception Year. Those pupils who need additional support with this quickly get the help they need to catch up and keep up with the pace of the phonics programme. Pupils are keen to read and share stories with each other. They relish the opportunities to discuss a wide range of texts. Lessons develop pupils' reading skills well and there is a love of reading across the school.

In the early years, children have regular opportunities to apply their learning throughout the day. Staff keep a close eye on children's understanding. The spacious, well-planned outdoor area provides children with daily opportunities to develop their large-muscle strength and balance skills and apply their mathematical knowledge in the 'maths shed' and other areas. Children are happy, independent and curious. They use their imagination creatively, as seen in their impromptu theatre performances and design of theatre tickets and leaflets.

The school has prioritised pupils' character development. Pupils benefit from the range of extra-curricular activities, leadership opportunities and community initiatives the school provides. However, in some areas, the school does not have a clear understanding of what pupils know and remember. For example, some pupils struggle to recall their learning about different faiths. As a result, they are sometimes unable to demonstrate the respect they intend to when having discussions.

The schools' behaviour systems have embedded a positive culture in the school. The culture of praise and reward builds pupils' self-worth. They have an excellent attitude to

learning. The school celebrates good attendance and punctuality through weekly newsletters and recognition in school. Pupils attend school well and on time.

Leaders and the trust have a clear commitment to providing a high-quality education for pupils. The expertise and passion of those responsible for governance add to the strength of the school. They demonstrate a strong understanding of school priorities and effectively hold the school to account. Staff workload and well-being are well considered. Staff are proud to work at Whitecliffe Academy. The trust provides ongoing training and development so staff are well equipped to teach the aspirational curriculum.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some pupils with SEND are too reliant on adult support in the classroom. At times, they do not receive the precisely tailored support needed to learn as well as they could. This means they can sometimes struggle to access their work independently. The school should continue to develop its strategies for adaptive teaching in lessons to support pupils with SEND.
- Sometimes, staff do not check to ensure pupils remember what they have been taught about different religions. As a result, some gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified or addressed. The school should ensure that it uses its systems to check pupils' knowledge and understanding of different faiths and that teachers address any gaps in knowledge or misconceptions that pupils may have.

## **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 predecessor school, Whitecliffe Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in November 2011.

## **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

|                                            |                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 143619                                                                                    |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Redcar and Cleveland                                                                      |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10346662                                                                                  |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                                                                                   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy converter                                                                         |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 2 to 11                                                                                   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                                                                     |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 96                                                                                        |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees                                                                         |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Mark Sanders OBE                                                                          |
| <b>CEO of the trust</b>                    | Rob Tarn CBE                                                                              |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Robert Cole                                                                               |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="https://wa.northerneducationtrust.org">https://wa.northerneducationtrust.org</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 11 July 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                                   |

## Information about this school

- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to senior leaders, including representatives from the board of trustees and the academy council.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and

looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about pupils' learning in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors 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.
- Inspectors met the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, spoke to pupils with SEND and reviewed plans to support these pupils. They visited lessons to see how pupils with SEND are supported.
- Inspectors visited the early years provision to check safeguarding arrangements and discuss the learning with children and leaders.
- Inspectors observed behaviour at the start of the day, at lunchtimes and in lessons.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and staff survey. They also considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text comments.

### **Inspection team**

Georgina Chinaka, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Scott Grason-Taylor

Ofsted Inspector

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