

# Inspection of Whiston Willis Primary Academy

Milton Avenue, Whiston, Prescot, Merseyside L35 2XY

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Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Early years provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Good

The principal of this school is Ian Cooper. This school is part of the Wade Deacon Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Gary Kelly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Fowler.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Whiston Willis Primary School is a happy, vibrant place where 'everyone has a voice'. The school's core values are firmly embedded in every aspect of school life. For example, pupils demonstrate how to be respectful and sensible through their exemplary behaviour, both during lessons and throughout the school day.

From the very outset, pupils, including children in the early years, learn to take responsibility for their own actions and to understand the consequences that their behaviour may have on others. They said that their school is a safe place and that they are confident that someone will listen to them if they have any worries.

The school has the highest ambition for every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve 'without limits'. Staff expect pupils to work hard and to try their best. Pupils listen attentively; they follow staff's instructions diligently and are keen to learn. Pupils achieve exceptionally well, and they understand that what they learn now will have a positive impact on their life chances.

The school has meticulously organised a wealth of purposeful experiences for pupils that extend far beyond the academic curriculum. These include a range of residential visits, a wide variety of additional clubs, and visitors who come into school to speak in assemblies. These experiences help pupils to develop their independence and confidence. Pupils have high aspirations for their futures, and they are determined to excel in everything that they do.

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

With the support of the trust, the school has developed a highly ambitious and carefully constructed curriculum that ensures the knowledge that pupils learn builds up logically over time. As they progress through the school, pupils develop a deep and rich understanding of concepts. Staff ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to revisit and recall prior learning. This helps them to consolidate earlier learning and to make meaningful connections across the curriculum.

The school ensures that teachers benefit from regular, appropriate, and high-quality training. This supports teachers to deliver the curriculum with confidence and flair. They have a clear understanding of what pupils must learn, and they design carefully crafted activities to meet the needs of pupils. The school identifies and meets the additional needs of pupils well. Through thoughtful adaptations, the school makes sure that pupils with SEND learn from the same curriculum as their peers. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Teachers use assessment strategies well to check that pupils have a secure understanding of previous content. When needed, staff provide appropriate support for pupils to address any misconceptions or gaps that may arise. This helps pupils, particularly those with SEND, to become increasingly independent learners.

Pupils are polite, courteous and considerate of staff and each other. Routines for excellent behaviour are well established in the early years, and these high expectations continue throughout the school. The school takes a judicious approach to ensuring that policies relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour are applied consistently and systemically. Staff do everything that they possibly can to support pupils to attend school regularly.

The school has cultivated a love of reading. It sits at the heart of the curriculum. Staff thoughtfully choose books that help pupils to expand their vocabulary, spark their interest and challenge pupils' thinking. Staff encourage pupils to read widely and often by exposing pupils to a wide range of high-quality texts. Older pupils recognise the importance of being able to read well.

In the early years, including in the Nursery Year, well-trained staff focus sharply on developing children's communication and language skills. For example, staff play alongside children, extend their vocabulary and introduce new words at every opportunity. Children in the Reception Year quickly learn the sounds that letters represent. The books that pupils read are matched carefully by staff to the sounds that they have learned. Staff provide additional high-quality support for those pupils who struggle with reading. This ensures that almost all pupils become confident, fluent readers by the end of Year 2.

The school's emphasis on pupils' wider development is exceptional. Pupils can articulately discuss and debate a wide range of issues affecting young people today. For example, the school has ensured that pupils understand that they have a voice and the right to form their own opinions. Pupils talked confidently about how the law protects people with different characteristics. Through the many aspects of the personal development programme, pupils gain a strong sense of culture and an understanding of different religions. The school also promotes the importance of pupils looking after their own well-being and physical health, such as the benefits of participating in regular exercise.

There is a wide variety of leadership opportunities available for pupils. Whether it is being a valued member of the well-being group or the pupil leadership group, pupils understand that such responsibilities allow them to develop skills for later life.

The school considers the workload and well-being of staff in the decisions that it makes about the school. For example, leaders carefully consider the impact of any refinements to policies to ensure that they do not cause undue workload for staff. As a result, staff feel well supported to carry out their roles effectively and to hone and develop their expertise.

Trustees and members of the local governing board have an accurate oversight of the school. They carry out their roles with diligence and fulfil their statutory duties. This enables those responsible for governance to hold the school fully to account for the quality of education the pupils receive.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### 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>	145613
<b>Local authority</b>	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290336
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	346
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Paul Fowler
<b>CEO</b>	Gary Kelly
<b>Principal</b>	Ian Cooper
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.whistonwillis.co.uk">www.whistonwillis.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	11 and 12 October 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Wade Deacon Trust.
- Whiston Willis Primary Academy converted to become an academy in May 2018. When its predecessor school, Whiston Willis Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school provides before- and after- school provision for its pupils.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the board of trustees, the CEO and members of the local governing board, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, and spoke to teachers and with some pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils reading with a familiar adult. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum with leaders 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 observed pupils' behaviour at various times in the school day. This included during lessons as well as at lunchtime.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents and carers in their responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors spoke with parents as they brought their children to school at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Pat Speed	His Majesty's Inspector
Elaine Jackson	Ofsted Inspector
Rachael Alarcon	Ofsted Inspector

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