

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Whittingham Primary Academy

Higham Hill Road, Walthamstow, London E17 5QX

Inspection dates:

10 and 12 and 13 June 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The head of school is Courtney Thompson. The school is part of United Learning 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), Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christian Brodie.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have established an inclusive and welcoming school where pupils feel known, safe and valued. Staff build warm, respectful relationships with pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps to ensure that everyone is supported to participate fully in classroom life. Pupils speak confidently about their learning and are proud of their achievements.

There are high expectations for all. Staff are ambitious for pupils and provide well-judged support to help everyone to succeed. This includes skilful teaching of the curriculum across subjects, with thoughtful adaptations for pupils where needed. As a result, pupils achieve highly.

Behaviour is calm and positive throughout the school. Pupils listen attentively in lessons and move around the school sensibly and with purpose. Older pupils provide good role models for younger pupils. Staff act quickly to address any issues, and pupils say that they are well looked after.

Pupils enjoy a rich range of opportunities beyond the classroom. Regular educational trips enhance learning, including visits to Epping Forest, the Science Museum and the William Morris Gallery. Pupils take part in choir, gymnastics and street dance, and many hold roles as school councillors or prefects. These opportunities support pupils' personal

development and give them a strong sense of responsibility and pride in their school community.

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

Reading is prioritised across the school. Pupils love reading and listening to stories. Children in Reception begin learning phonics straight away, following a consistent, well-planned approach. Staff are well trained. They deliver phonics sessions confidently. They regularly check which sounds pupils remember and spot pupils who needs extra help quickly. These pupils receive targeted support that helps them to catch up. Books are matched precisely to the sounds that pupils know. As a result of the school's highly effective approach to early reading, pupils gain the confidence and fluency they need to become independent readers.

The curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced. The school has thought carefully about what pupils need to know and the order in which they should learn it. This supports pupils to build knowledge securely over time. For instance, in science, pupils use key vocabulary with confidence. They explain how what they learned in earlier years helps them to understand new content. In mathematics, children in Reception confidently use their knowledge of numbers to solve problems, while older pupils draw on their secure knowledge of times tables to tackle more-complex calculations.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They explain ideas clearly and use practical examples to help pupils understand tricky concepts. Teachers routinely check how well pupils have understood new material and address misconceptions quickly. Pupils with SEND are identified accurately. They receive timely help to support them to successfully learn the curriculum. Staff are skilled in adapting the teaching of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND learn successfully alongside their peers.

Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils know what is expected of them and behave well. Routines are firmly established, including in the early years, where children show independence and care for one another. At social times, pupils play sensibly and move around the school in a respectful manner. They learn about how to be good friends and what they should do if they have any issues with their peers. Pupils say that staff listen to their concerns and take action when needed.

Leaders are determined that all pupils attend school regularly. Staff work closely with families to remove barriers to attendance. Persistent absence is reducing as a result of this work. The school continues to review and refine its approach to ensure that attendance improves further.

The school's personal development offer is a strength. Pupils take on meaningful leadership roles, including as school councillors, digital leaders and anti-bullying ambassadors. They learn about rights, democracy and fairness through the curriculum and special themed weeks. Educational visits are well chosen to enhance learning. For example, during a recent visit to the Houses of Parliament, pupils were able to give

context to what they learn about fundamental British values. Pupils also enjoy taking part in public speaking activities and a range of sporting events.

Staff speak positively about the school's leadership. They feel well supported and appreciate the care that is shown for their well-being. Staff value the training and development they receive, much of which is supported by the trust. Leaders at all levels, including the trust, share a clear ambition that every pupil in the school can and will succeed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 September 2016.

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	139317
Local authority	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10379140
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	375
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christian Brodie
CEO of the trust	Jon Coles
Headteacher	Courtney Thompson
Website	www.whittinghamprimaryacademy.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined the United Learning Trust in April 2019.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspection started on 10 June 2025. Inspectors returned on 12 June 2025 to gather additional evidence in line with [Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence](#) policy.
- The inspectors met with the head of school and other senior staff. The inspectors also held separate meetings with members of the governing body and a representative of the United Learning Trust.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school.
- 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.
- The inspectors also spoke to some parents and carers and considered the responses to the Ofsted online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also reviewed the responses to the Ofsted staff online survey.

Inspection team

Adam Vincent, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Luke Stubbles

His Majesty's Inspector

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