

Inspection of a good school: Westwood Primary School

Westwood Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 9RR

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 March 2022

Outcome

Westwood Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Westwood are proud of their school. Pupils show respect towards one another and to visitors. Pupils are friendly and can explain the school's ethos of 'no outsiders' as 'you can be anyone you want,' and 'everyone is welcome'.

Pupils take their leadership responsibilities seriously. These roles include taking care of the school's hens or being a sports or community leader. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they get to report back on their responsibilities in class or assemblies.

Pupils behave well in school. Pupils, including the youngest children, take turns and play together well. Pupils are keen to be the best they can be. They enjoy receiving praise and rewards when they have worked hard.

Pupils enjoy learning and like to be set challenges. Pupils can explain what they are learning and can link it to experiences they have had, such as going to the farm, the local museum and the theatre.

Pupils know that there is always someone to go to if they need to talk. Pupils say that bullying is rare, but that if it happens, adults help them. Pupils feel cared for and safe. Some parents and carers said that their children 'love school, and they don't want to come home!'.

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

Leaders at Westwood Primary have created an interesting curriculum that covers a wide range of subjects to ensure that pupils have the knowledge and skills to move on to secondary school by the time they leave Year 6.

Leaders have made sure that there is a focus on pupils' language and vocabulary development and the importance of understanding new words and concepts.

Staff have received high-quality training and work with their partner school to improve their subject knowledge in most subjects. Staff consistently follow the school's approach to delivering the curriculum and ensure that lessons are well structured. Teachers regularly recap and link previous learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 were able to link the story of the three little pigs and the properties of materials to their learning about the Great Fire of London. As staff introduce new learning, they use a range of good-quality visual and written resources. Consequently, pupils remember what they learn over time and apply this to more complex activities.

Leaders have made reading a central part of day-to-day life in the school. The new phonics scheme is being taught consistently well. Pupil read books that are well matched to the sounds they are learning. Some pupils have extra phonics and reading sessions. This is helping those few pupils to catch up quickly. Leaders are ensuring that pupils access a range of books during reading time. Teachers encourage pupils to express their views on the books they read and of those being read to them to check for understanding.

Leaders have accurately identified pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff have been well trained to ensure that these pupils are able to succeed by accessing the same curriculum as their peers. Staff use a range of strategies to make sure that pupils with SEND know what to do and how to improve their work, for example by having their daily mathematics and reading curriculum supported by skilled adults.

While most of the curriculum is well planned and delivered, some subjects are at an early stage of development. For example, in design and technology and art, leaders have decided on the specific knowledge and concepts that they want pupils to learn. However, staff have only received initial training on how to implement these. Consequently, teachers are not as confident to deliver the intended curriculum in these few areas.

Pupils are well behaved in school and on the playground. Pupils report that there can be silly behaviour, but adults soon sort it out. Pupils enjoy helping each other and understand that everyone is different.

Leaders have made sure that pupils have access to a wide range of cultural, social and religious experiences. This includes visitors, trips, clubs and leadership opportunities. Pupils talk excitedly about these. For example, the youngest children told the inspector about a visit to the farm and the older pupils have planned a charity event to raise money for the community.

Although leaders have used a range of strategies to improve overall attendance during and since the pandemic, there is still a group of pupils who have persistently high absence. Leaders have not analysed this group or addressed this with enough urgency.

The local governing body ensures that its statutory roles are carried out effectively, especially in checking the quality of education and safeguarding. Governors have specific roles and check that leaders are working on the correct priorities. However, governors have been less effective in their monitoring of attendance. Governors do not know

enough about what leaders are doing to tackle the persistent absence of a small group of pupils, and the impact of absence on these pupils and their learning.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that the continued development of the quality of education where the work is new, alongside developing more rigorous strategies to improve the attendance of pupils with persistent absence, may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils are safe. Any concern, however minor, is recorded and reported to the correct people, including relevant external agencies. Leaders ensure that information is shared to protect pupils from harm.

Staff are well trained and have regular briefings. Leaders check that all staff have the most up-to-date knowledge about risks to pupils online and in the community.

Staff adapt the curriculum when needed to remind pupils about keeping safe. Pupils show a good understanding of keeping safe online. Pupils know whom to talk to if they are worried.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Implementation of the curriculum is not fully complete. Staff have not been trained in a few areas of the curriculum. They are not as confident to deliver these as well as they are other curriculum areas. As a result, pupils are not accessing the same high-quality lessons throughout the curriculum. Leaders must ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to deliver what leaders intend to an equally high standard, so that pupils achieve well in all areas of the curriculum.
- Governors have not overseen the monitoring of persistent absence as well as they have other areas of their work. There is a group of pupils whose weaker attendance is impacting negatively on their access to the curriculum. Governors do not know enough about what leaders are doing to manage this. Governors need to ensure that their monitoring of this aspect of leaders' work is as rigorous as other areas of their work.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or

lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2017.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	139804
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10211480
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Bob Dool
Headteacher	Rae Aldous (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.westwoodprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	22 and 23 February 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Westwood Primary School is part of the Active Learning Trust.
- The school works in partnership with The Grove Primary School. The two schools share the executive headteacher, the two heads of school and the assistant headteachers who work at Westwood Primary.
- The governing board is responsible for Westwood Primary School and The Grove Primary School.
- The school uses one alternative provision.
- The school has a Nursery class that takes two-year-olds in the afternoon sessions.
- The school operates a breakfast and after-school provision for the pupils who attend the school.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the heads of schools, the assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator and the director of education for the trust. The inspector also met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing board and five trustees.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke to leaders and looked at pupils' work in science, art and design and technology. The inspector also visited lessons in science and design and technology.
- The inspector spoke to parents when pupils were being dropped off in the playground. The inspector spoke to pupils in the playground and in the dining hall. The inspector also visited the breakfast club.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector checked the school's single central record, considered the safeguarding policy, and spoke to staff and pupils. The inspector looked at case files and discussed a range of safeguarding records with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector considered 33 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 19 free-text responses submitted during the inspection. The inspector reviewed 23 responses to the online staff survey and 15 responses to the online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Isabel Davis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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