

Westwood Primary School

Westwood Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 9RR

Inspection dates

22–23 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- A warm, safe and positive climate nurtures pupils' personal and academic development well. Pupils develop very positive attitudes to school and, hence, do well in their learning.
- Parents are fulsome in their praise of the school and how it is helping their children to achieve well. Those whose children have joined mid-year are very pleased with how quickly they have settled in and the progress they have already made.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have created this positive culture of learning. Their excellent leadership has enabled the school to improve significantly over the last few years. Staff are proud to work here.
- Governors provide good support and question leaders well on the school's performance. However, they could do more to strengthen partnerships with parents and the local community.
- The Active Learning Trust provides strong support to the school, leaders and governors.
- Most pupils make good progress from their individual starting points in reading, writing and mathematics and achieve standards of work that are in line with national averages by the time they are ready to leave.
- While the very small number of the most able pupils also achieve well, not enough middle-ability pupils make sufficient progress to attain the highest standards of work.
- Children in the early years make excellent progress and achieve a good level of development. This is because the provision is tailored exceptionally well to their needs.
- Teaching is good across the school. Teachers plan lessons diligently and build effectively on what pupils have learned before.
- Teaching assistants are used highly effectively in lessons and when taking small groups of pupils for more intensive coaching. They provide exceptionally good support.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress from their starting points due to the carefully targeted support they receive.
- Pupils develop good knowledge and understanding in key subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education. However, the way these are taught does not help pupils to deepen their thinking or strengthen their writing further.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities provided. They are safe in school and feel safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Support more middle-ability pupils to make rapid progress and achieve greater depth in standards in English and mathematics, by ensuring that they:
 - are given sufficiently challenging work in lessons
 - are moved on quickly enough to cover work in more depth.
- Raise standards further by:
 - developing the curriculum so that it provides engaging opportunities for pupils to explore and investigate ideas
 - ensuring that work in some subjects helps pupils to use and develop skills of analysis, critical evaluation and reasoning
 - providing more demanding written activities which enable pupils to practise writing explanations, justify opinions and views and summarise analysis they have carried out in science, history, geography and religious education
 - ensuring that pupils' spelling and use of wider vocabulary are improved.
- Develop the role of governors so that they take a more proactive approach to establishing relationships with parents and the wider community, and in supporting the school in raising aspirations.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have established a strong working partnership. They share the same vision for the future of the school and are both determined to make it the best that it can be. Pupils are deeply valued and their education and care are given the highest priority.
- Working together, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have created good teamwork among staff and a common understanding of the school's key priorities. All staff, including those who are new, know what the school is working towards and they understand their own roles and the contribution they must make. Middle leaders are well supported. A number are new to their roles, but are developing well as a result of the effective management systems within the school.
- Staff are given high-quality training and support to enable them to improve their work, including teaching and learning. Training and professional development are informed by the school's effective monitoring of its work. The individual needs of staff are also identified well through the management of performance. Staff are very positive about the training and coaching they receive and feel that their practice has improved as a result.
- The deputy headteacher is leading on a new approach to the Year 1 curriculum. This is enabling much better transition, and hence progression, for pupils from the end of early years. They are building well on the skills of investigation and exploration developed in the early years.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have identified that the curriculum in the rest of the school also needs to be revised. This is because subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education are not taught in a way which helps pupils to explore and investigate ideas to develop their knowledge and skills. There are good opportunities in English and mathematics for these.
- Extra-curricular and enrichment activities, such as visits and visitors, make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies are used well to help pupils understand key values such as respect and the contribution they make to the school community.
- The school has a very good understanding of the issues and barriers to the good achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Hence, leaders are astute in the way they target the pupil premium funding to remove these barriers successfully. The use of pupil premium funding is effective. Differences in attainment disappear very quickly as a result, though some begin to reappear in the middle of key stage 2.
- The school uses funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. These pupils have good support and are making good progress.
- The school has worked hard and, for the most part, successfully to engage and involve parents in their children's learning. Those responding to the Ofsted survey, 'Parent View', were very positive about the school and written comments were wholly positive. Leaders are aware of the need to continue to work with parents to help them

support their children's learning and preparation for future life.

- The sports premium is used effectively to enhance physical education and sports provision, and to ensure that this provision continues to be good. Sports coaches provide regular after-school activities which pupils thoroughly enjoy. School staff are developing their own skills to lead sporting activities. The school's use of funding has a positive impact on pupils' health and well-being.
- The school works in a strong collaboration with the Active Learning Trust. Through the trust, the school has access to effective training, of which it makes good use. It engages well in the local 'hub' of primary schools in North Suffolk to draw from models of best practice elsewhere. The headteacher and deputy headteacher also contribute to the training and development provided by the trust, sharing the things they do particularly well.

Governance of the school

- Governors are engaged well in the work of the school. They receive good-quality information from the headteacher and other staff so that they are well informed. Governors make good use of the information they receive to delve more deeply into pupils' performance and teaching.
- While governors are increasingly active in their oversight of the school's work and checking that leaders are doing enough to promote good performance, they are not as proactive as they could be in driving their work forward. This is especially the case in relation to their engagement with parents and the wider community.
- The chair of governors meets frequently enough with the headteacher to pick up quickly on any urgent issues that emerge and which governors need to be aware of.
- The governing body is aware of staff performance through the information it receives from the headteacher. The chair is involved in the headteacher's performance management which is carried out by the trust.
- Governors keep a close eye on the school's finances, paying particular attention to the way funds such as the pupil premium and special educational needs funding are spent.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school culture is geared towards making sure it is a safe place for pupils and that they find the adults who work with them easy to approach if they have problems or concerns.
- Staff are well trained and vigilant. They readily report any concerns they may have about a pupil, no matter how trivial.
- Records are very well maintained and the school's rigorous systems make it easy to track the progress of interventions and actions. The school works well with other agencies to support pupils who may be at risk of harm.
- Governors provide effective oversight of the school's safeguarding work.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers follow the school's policies on teaching, learning and assessment consistently and well. They plan lessons with care so that new knowledge, understanding and skills are built on solid foundations.
- The activities and work that teachers provide for pupils in English and mathematics are both interesting and put together effectively so that they help pupils to practise new skills or consolidate their knowledge and understanding. Pupils are given good opportunities to discuss ideas to help them to understand their work.
- In lessons, teachers create a positive learning climate and have strong relationships with pupils. Consequently, pupils are keen to learn and to do well.
- Teachers' feedback is used effectively, in line with the school's policy, to help pupils improve their work and not repeat mistakes they have made in the past. The presentation of work is consistently good across the school.
- Reading is taught well, with regular practice in answering comprehension questions and interpreting a range of different types of texts, both fiction and non-fiction.
- Staff teach phonics effectively, so that children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 learn to read with confidence and accuracy. All those who read to inspectors used their phonic knowledge well to work out how to read unfamiliar words.
- Pupils are taught basic mathematics skills effectively and increasingly apply these in subjects across the curriculum.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to ask probing questions to extend and develop pupils' understanding further. Across the full range of subjects, pupils develop their knowledge and skills well, although staff do not place sufficient emphasis on improving pupils' spelling and their use of a wider vocabulary.
- Teachers ensure that lower-attaining pupils are well supported. However, they are not as consistent in making sure that middle-attaining pupils who are capable of working at a high level do so. Sometimes, teachers do not move them on quickly enough and so they continue to simply consolidate work they can already do.
- Teaching assistants have a very good understanding of their roles and provide highly effective support to the pupils they are working with.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have a very secure understanding of the learning needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They draw from a wide range of strategies to support these pupils to make small, but very important and often very significant, steps in their learning.
- Pupils have good opportunities to practise writing at length in English but writing activities are not demanding enough in subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education. They do not help pupils enough to practise writing explanations, justify their views or summarise key points from discussions or analysis they have carried out.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are friendly. They are polite to adults, visitors and one another. They respond well in social situations. They answer questions when prompted.
- Pupils get on well and form strong relationships with others. Those who join the school part way through their primary education settle in quickly because others include them and help them to develop friendships.
- The school is focused on developing and strengthening pupils' behaviours for learning, such as resilience and perseverance, especially when tackling work that is difficult. Pupils are making good progress in developing the personal characteristics that will help to make them better learners. It is evident that they are becoming increasingly confident learners who enjoy school.
- When working together, pupils show good levels of cooperation with one another and help one another willingly. They respond well in lessons to the tasks they have been given and enjoy the work they do. Typically, pupils concentrate on their work and often become engrossed in what they are doing.
- Pupils learn to show respect for those who are different from themselves. They learn about other cultures and ways of life. Pupils understand the importance of rules and having a voice. The school council provides them with the platform to contribute their views on how the school runs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave particularly well in lessons, where they are attentive and concentrate hard on what they are asked to do. On the rare occasions when the behaviour of some is not to the high standard expected of all, teachers are skilled in managing this decisively.
- Some pupils become a little over-enthusiastic during lunch or playtimes, or behave in an immature way. However, staff manage these instances well. Most pupils behave well, though, when moving about the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying or poor behaviour. They know the consequences for poor behaviour and the rewards on offer for good behaviour. Pupils are confident that any bullying, rare though it is, is dealt with well by adults. They are also confident about taking concerns to an adult.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- Attendance of most pupils is good and, through the hard work of the school, persistent absence is declining. Overall, attendance is in line with that nationally for most groups, and improving rapidly for others.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make increasingly good progress as they move through the school. Those who join the school part way through their primary education also make good progress.
- In the national curriculum tests and assessments at the end of key stages 1 and 2, the proportions of pupils reaching expected standards in writing and mathematics were at least in line with the proportions nationally.
- In mathematics, at the end of key stage 2, an above-average proportion achieved the expected standard. This is a good improvement from the previous inspection. Pupils confidently solve number problems and explain how they have done so.
- Reading results at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 were above the national average, but were a little lower at the end of key stage 2. The school has taken rapid and effective action to improve reading standards this year.
- Standards of work in the school currently are broadly in line with average at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, though relatively few pupils achieve the higher standard.
- Nonetheless, most pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as they move through the school. The most able pupils make good progress too. However, very few pupils have high prior attainment. Not enough of those of middle ability, and who have the capability to do better, are making the rapid progress needed to enable them to achieve the higher standard.
- Despite a dip in the results of the phonics test in 2016, pupils develop good knowledge of letters and sounds and use this to help them to read difficult or new words. They use their knowledge less well to help them to spell. Through the good focus on comprehension, pupils are getting on well with interpreting the texts they read and reading 'between the lines' to discern meaning.
- Writing standards develop well and teachers and pupils work hard to produce good-quality writing. However, pupils' spelling is not strong and many pupils do not have a wide vocabulary. The school recognises that there is more to do to improve writing standards further. This is one of the reasons why the school is developing the curriculum to provide more opportunities for richer use of language.
- Art books show good development of a range of skills and pupils' creativity. Displays around the school provide evidence of sound work in subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education. These, alongside pupils' written work, indicate they are developing secure knowledge and understanding of these subjects. However, the development of deeper thinking skills, such as reasoning and analysis, are less evident.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress because planning for their needs is diligent and detailed. Teaching assistants use the plans and provide focused and wide-ranging support to enable these pupils to achieve highly effectively.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress, especially in the younger years, so that any differences between disadvantaged pupils and others disappear at an early stage of their primary education. In some year groups, disadvantaged pupils are outperforming others. However, some differences reappear in Years 5 and 6. This is partly due to

pupils joining the school from elsewhere part way through their education and some arriving with lower levels of achievement. It is also due to some pupils becoming less interested in the curriculum provided and not having developed some of the important skills, such as being able to analyse or critically evaluate information and texts they are working on in order to help them achieve in greater depth.

- Leaders and staff have a very precise understanding of why sometimes differences between disadvantaged pupils and others reappear later in key stage 2 and that the curriculum needs further development to support all pupils and keep them motivated and engaged.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Early years staff build exceptionally well on skills and knowledge that are significantly below age-related expectations when children begin at the school.
- Standards have been rising since the headteacher took over the leadership of the school. An above-average proportion of children achieved a good level of development in 2016, though very few exceeded this standard. Nonetheless, the standards of work for all children have improved significantly from their starting points. Children's books and 'learning stories' show rapid development of early reading and writing skills.
- The provision is very carefully thought out and activities are exceptionally well put together to generate not only strong and secure learning, but also excitement.
- Activities are rich and enable children to explore the world around them and to develop their thinking exceptionally well. All adults interact very well with children and extend their learning at every opportunity. As a result, there are very high levels of engagement among children.
- The adults in the early years have an excellent understanding of the needs of different age groups and how very young children, such as the two-year-olds, develop. Hence, their interactions and the activities provided are tailored very well to the different age groups in the early years.
- The role play areas are attractive and interesting places to be. Adults demonstrate to children how to use these to play out different scenarios. Children respond completely naturally to playing a role. For example, a three-year-old going into the 'site office' for a construction site sat at a computer saying he was 'doing my research now...' while others made bricks out of mud and operated the cement mixer to get more mud to make bricks with. This typical activity develops children's speaking and listening skills as well as their creativity.
- The identification and support for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is exceptionally good, enabling these pupils to make strong progress.
- Those who are more able are extended well and given additional work to help them reach higher standards. For example, an adult worked on subtraction with an able child who went on to write the subtraction number sentence.
- The support for welfare and safety is outstanding. The two-year-olds are given the

additional care and support they need, and the time to think, and develop very appropriately for their ages.

- The outdoor area is a real strength and is used highly effectively for all age groups. It provides exceptionally good opportunities for exploration and investigation. Adults support children in taking well-considered risks in their play, but also to ask searching questions about the minibeasts they are exploring.
- Both indoors and out, the emphasis on richness of language and encouraging children to develop their own use of language is a major strength.
- Leadership, right from the top and within the area itself, is outstanding. The systems and processes are so well embedded that, despite some staff changes, the high-quality provision continues to be maintained and sustained.
- The strong links established with parents enable them to participate and support their children's learning well.
- Pupil premium funding is used with precision to eliminate differences between disadvantaged children and others.

School details

Unique reference number	139804
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10026126

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	226
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Jackie Cutchey
Headteacher	Rae Aldous
Telephone number	01502 565673
Website	www.westwoodprimary.org
Email address	head@westwoodprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the impact of the funding for special educational needs and not all governors are included on the register of business interests on the school's website.
- Westwood Primary School is part of The Active Learning Trust, which it joined when it became an academy in 2013. This was before the last inspection. The school complies with the requirements on what academies should publish.
- Westwood Primary School is similar in size to other schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. About 10% of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is comparatively high. An above-average proportion have a statement of special

educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

- Pupil mobility is higher than in most schools and a greater number of pupils than nationally leave or join part way through their primary education.
- The school meets the government's floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in all classes. A number of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders and other middle leaders. They also met with a group of six governors including the chair of governors. The lead inspector spoke to an officer from the Active Learning Trust.
- Members of the inspection team spoke informally to pupils in lessons and around the school, as well as holding discussions with a representative group of pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading in lessons and by taking some out of lessons, to check how well they were developing their reading skills.
- In carrying out the inspection, the inspection team took account of 42 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, 'Parent View'. One member of the team also spoke with parents as they dropped off their children at school.
- The inspection team also took account of the responses to Ofsted questionnaires completed by 36 staff and 26 pupils.
- Members of the team observed the work of the school. They looked at the school's improvement plan, a range of policies and procedures, documents relating to the work of the governing body and the arrangements for ensuring that pupils are safeguarded. Documentation reviewed included records of assessment information relating to pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour and attendance. The school's website was also checked.

Inspection team

Gulshan Kayembe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lindsay Hanger	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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