

Inspection of a good school: Weston Lullingfields CofE School

Weston Lullingfields, Near Baschurch, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 2AW

Inspection dates:

19 November 2019

Outcome

Weston Lullingfields CofE School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school. The school lives up to its motto of feeling like a big family. For example, older pupils commonly help younger ones and involve them in their games at playtime. Parents and carers appreciate the individual attention that pupils receive. Pupils behave very well, and look smart. There are no concerns about bullying.

However, pupils do not get off to the best possible start academically. Teachers do not plan their learning as well as they should. Work does not build precisely on what pupils can already do. The most able pupils would sometimes enjoy a stiffer challenge. Staff know the importance of early reading but the teaching of phonics and the encouragement for pupils to read need significant attention.

Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum. Teachers often draw well on the local area or pupils' own experience to make lessons more engaging. Trips to places of interest help to bring learning to life. Pupils enjoy a good range of activities outside the classroom, such as chess, karate and crafts.

The newly appointed headteacher has an excellent understanding of the work to be done. She has written long-term plans that are helping teachers to plan pupils' work better.

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

The teaching of phonics needs to be more precise. Pupils do not learn to read as easily as they might do. Teaching does not present letters and their sounds in a clear and consistent way. Adults sometimes fail to notice pupils' misunderstandings and so do not help them to learn from their mistakes. Those who fall behind receive effective support from staff and adult volunteers. In recent years, all pupils have passed the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.

The school does not provide some pupils with reading books that are well matched to their abilities. The encouragement for pupils to read at home is half-hearted. Some pupils told us that they love reading, some said not.

In other subjects, teachers are beginning to use the long-term plans that the headteacher has written. Teachers sometimes question pupils effectively to test what they have learned and to deepen their thinking. They ensure that pupils understand the key terms associated with a particular topic. Older pupils have good opportunities to develop their writing skills in different subjects. However, the quality of education is inconsistent. Sometimes, teachers lack a clear idea about what pupils should learn. They focus instead on what pupils should do. Although staff uphold high standards for pupils' behaviour, their expectations for the quality of their work are not entirely consistent.

Teachers have a growing understanding of the need to make sure that each topic draws on the knowledge and skills that pupils already have. However, they are not yet using this understanding to plan the sequence of pupils' work. Teachers do not encourage pupils to see the connections between new topics and those they have studied before. For example, older pupils who were looking at mountains could not remember any previous work about physical geography.

At times, teachers give the most able pupils the opportunity to extend their skills, taking responsibility for their own work. Sometimes, their work is too easy. On occasion, pupils who complete their work are left with nothing to do. In mathematics, the most able have too few opportunities to apply their knowledge to practical situations and to deepen their understanding. The very few pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from effective support. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

Pupils have important opportunities to demonstrate responsibility and initiative, for example setting up a fair trade event and leading sports activities. Leaders are well aware of the importance of introducing pupils to a range of different cultures.

The school benefits considerably from belonging to the federation. Leaders make good use of the expertise of staff from the other schools. Pupils take part in joint events, such as sports matches and trips to places of interest. Leaders have taken good account of teachers' workload, making changes to the school's assessment procedures. Local authority officers have provided effective support for the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are well trained. Staff are vigilant, and know the pupils and their families very well. Leaders record any concerns that they have about pupils' welfare, and make sure that the right people know about them. Staff work effectively with families to resolve any difficulties. Leaders make the necessary checks on staff who join the school. The governing body supports leaders well, drawing on good practice from other schools in the federation.

Pupils told us that there is no bullying in the school. They feel entirely safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Currently, day-to-day planning for the teaching of phonics is not wholly effective so pupils do not learn to read as easily as they could. The tasks that staff set for pupils should fit into a coherent sequence so that pupils build up their knowledge incrementally. Staff should routinely assess how well pupils have grasped new ideas and skills, and adjust the learning accordingly. Staff should provide pupils with reading books that reinforce the letters and patterns that they have recently learned. There should be more energetic promotion of the benefits and joys of reading for pleasure. As pupils grow older, staff should continue to guide pupils' reading choices.
- At the moment, teachers are learning to use the long-term plans that help to ensure that pupils follow the national curriculum. Sometimes, the ordering of learning means that work does not build securely on what pupils already know and understand. This reduces their ability to learn and remember new material. Leaders should continue to work with teachers to sequence and plan topics in each subject so that pupils can and do draw on their previous knowledge and understanding. In mixed-age classes, teachers will need to recognise the range of pupils' abilities and the differences in their prior learning.
- The most able pupils sometimes receive work that they can complete too easily. Such work does not challenge them to think deeply and develop their understanding fully. Teachers should ensure that the day-to-day learning of the most able pupils in every year group represents a consistently stimulating level of challenge.

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 school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, 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 convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 23–24 September 2015.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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 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	123513
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10111797
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Eve Whitmore
Headteacher	Marilyn Hunt
Website	https://westonlullingfields.westcliffefederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 September 2015

Information about this school

- Weston Lullingfields CofE School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school became a member of the Westcliffe Federation in the summer of 2017. This federation of four rural primary schools has one governing body.
- About a quarter of the pupils attend part-time under a 'flexi-schooling' arrangement approved by the local authority. Pupils receive home education on those days when they are not in school.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2019. She is also headteacher of one of the other schools in the federation.
- The school is a Church of England faith school. Its religious character was last inspected in January 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Before the inspection, I reviewed the information on the school's website and spoke to the headteacher on the telephone about the school's curriculum.
- We conducted deep dives into reading, mathematics and geography. We held discussions with leaders, visited lessons, held meetings with staff, looked at examples of pupils' work and had discussions with pupils.
- We took account of the 13 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents. We also considered 10 free-text comments, and written correspondence. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day.
- Ten responses to the staff survey were considered. We also spoke to staff about their professional development and their support from leaders.
- We spoke to pupils in lessons and at social times about their experiences at school.
- I checked the school's employment records and met with the designated senior leader for safeguarding. I met with the special educational needs coordinator.
- I listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 reading.
- I met with the chair and four other members of the federation's governing body. I also met with a representative of the local authority.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Orgill

Ofsted Inspector

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