

Inspection of Underwood West Academy

Newcastle Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 3LF

Inspection dates: 20–21 November 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They particularly value the care and support they receive from teachers. Pupils thrive in this school because teachers make learning interesting. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and know them well. As a result, pupils, including those with additional needs, achieve well. Pupils are excited about reading and finding out about new things. They are curious and interested in the world around them. Pupils' personal development is very strong.

Pupils behave well and play happily with one another. They are kind and caring. They told us that the school is like a family. Pupils said that they get on with one another. If they fall out, this is quickly resolved, with teachers helping. Bullying is rare. Pupils who arrive from other countries are welcomed. Differences between people are celebrated. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well and included in and out of class.

Parents and carers told us that they are happy with the school. They praise the teachers for the close attention they give to their children. They value the fact that the school makes their children happy and eager to come to school. One parent told us that her daughter loves school so much that that she cries if she ever has to miss a day.

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

Leaders have thought long and hard about the curriculum they want the school to teach. They have considered the knowledge and experiences that pupils need. The themes for pupils' learning are linked to well-chosen novels. These books help to develop pupils' literacy skills and broaden their horizons. In Year 2, pupils enjoy reading 'Katie Goes to London'. Pupils learn about London in their geography lessons as well, and their learning is connected in different subjects. A field visit for pupils compared St. James's Park in London with Queens park in Crewe. Pupils in Year 4 are helped to understand what it is like to be an immigrant by reading 'Coming to England' by Floella Benjamin. Teachers make learning meaningful for pupils.

Leaders make sure that learning to read is a priority in the school. Pupils make good progress from their low starting points. Pupils who speak English as a second language and those with SEND thrive because their learning is well supported. Pupils' phonics knowledge and skills are increasing year by year. Children in Reception love stories and receive frequent teaching of phonics. However, some teachers do not always use the correct sounds of letters with children. This is confusing. Leaders have improved the range and quality of reading books across the school this year. However, some children's reading books are not well matched to their phonics skills. Some children find the words in their reading books too tricky to read.

Teachers help pupils to develop their numeracy skills well. Pupils become confident

in tackling more difficult problems as they get older. This is because their basic skills in arithmetic have been taught so well. Pupils develop their knowledge and skills well in a range of other subjects too. For example, in design and technology pupils learn how to design and use pivots and levers. They learn well because the teacher builds on what they know already. Pupils also develop good scientific knowledge across the school. However, some teachers are not always confident in planning and conducting practical experiments.

Teachers provide pupils with a wide variety of opportunities to broaden their interests and be curious. Pupils love the sport and other activities after school. These include arts and crafts, and dance. Teachers improve pupils' understanding of the world around them very well indeed. Older pupils told us about the 'super-learning' week, during which they learned about the environment and climate change. The new 'eco warrior' group has used assemblies to warn pupils about the dangers of plastic waste. Pupils learn to be caring and kind individuals as well as responsible citizens.

Children in early years progress well in all their areas of learning. They are safe and well cared for. Children are provided with a rich variety of toys and other items to help them to learn. The adults help children to gain confidence through their play. Parents give high praise for this provision.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, are determined to improve the life chances of all pupils. Disadvantage and disability are no barriers to achievement in this school. Governors and the trust members know the school well. Together, they ensure that teachers are trained and supported to deliver the best curriculum they can. Staff feel supported and excited to be a part of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are vigilant about keeping pupils safe. They know their responsibilities extremely well. Staff report any concerns that they have about pupils' safety and, when needed, these are referred on in a timely way. Safeguarding leaders' communication with parents are strong. The family workers and community liaison staff ensure that communication and the correct support is provided for families. The personal, social, health education programme is well planned to help pupils manage risk, including online. Pupils, parents and staff agree that pupils are safe in this school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for most subjects, including English and mathematics, is implemented well and teachers have good subject knowledge. However, key stage 2 teachers' confidence in teaching and planning key parts of the science

curriculum, such as practical investigations, is not as strong as it could be. Leaders should ensure that teachers' skills are suitably strengthened in science.

- Leaders have implemented a clear phonics programme. The curriculum to support reading in key stage 1 is strong. While the phonics curriculum builds up well in Reception, some teachers require further support to strengthen their knowledge and skills about teaching phonics, including their precision in using the sounds needed. This will support consistent phonics teaching across Reception and key stage 1, and avoid confusion for children.
- Leaders have improved the range and quality of reading books across the school. This is not as well developed in the early years. Leaders should ensure that the books children read in early years more appropriately matches their phonics knowledge.

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're 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	143153
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10110873
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	436
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kevin Simpson
Principal	Laura Jones
Website	www.underwoodwest.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher started her role in September 2019.
- The school is part of Aspire Education Trust.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We considered the following subjects in depth on the first day of this inspection: design and technology, geography, mathematics, reading and science. In addition, we considered computing, religious education and writing as part of our activities on the second day of the inspection.
- We held discussions with the headteacher, middle leaders, teachers, other members of staff and governors. These discussions considered the quality of education, the wider experiences of pupils at the school and aspects of pupils' behaviour, and leadership and management. The lead inspector met with members of the board of trustees.
- In considering the quality of education, we concentrated on reading, mathematics, geography, design and technology, and science in depth. We discussed the arrangements for the curriculum and teaching with the headteacher

and teachers in these subjects. We visited lessons and then talked with pupils about what they had been learning and their experiences of school life. We looked at pupils' exercise books.

- An inspector heard pupils read and talked to teachers about how the school teaches reading.
- We spoke to staff, governors and pupils about how the school keeps pupils safe. We considered the information available online to parents about safeguarding and in the school. An inspector examined the single central record of the checks undertaken to make sure that staff are suitable to work in a school. We also reviewed the school's safeguarding policy and arrangements.
- We took account of Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils as well as the school's own surveys.

Inspection team

Zarina Connolly, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lynne Ryder	Ofsted Inspector
Joan Grant	Ofsted Inspector

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