

Inspection of a good school: Woodcote Primary School

Willowbrook Close, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire LE65 1JX

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 May 2021

Outcome

Woodcote Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school with a caring, friendly ethos. Leaders and staff put pupils' well-being at the heart of everything they do. They expect all pupils to aim high, try their best and 'have the opportunity to shine', as stated in the school's aims.

Lots of pupils told me that the staff are kind and that it is easy to make friends. They said that they feel confident about how to keep safe because they learn about safety in lessons and assemblies. Pupils understand the meaning of bullying. They said, 'We are not worried about bullying. It is rare and the teachers will sort it out.'

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They understand that rules are in place to keep them safe and help them to learn.

In mathematics, pupils benefit from a well-planned curriculum that enables them to know and remember more. In other areas of the curriculum, pupils do not achieve as well as they might. Pupils do not make a strong enough start in learning to read.

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

The mathematics curriculum is well led and planned. It sets out the important knowledge and skills that pupils should gain, from early years to Year 6. In lesson visits, I saw pupils in Years 5 and 6 using what they had already learned to consider challenging concepts when studying fractions. They applied what they already knew to solve mathematical problems with confidence. Staff in early years provide teaching and activities in mathematics that will prepare children well for Years 1 and 2.

Leaders are in the process of rewriting the curriculum in all other subjects. The impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) has partly hindered this work. However, current curriculum plans

are incomplete. They do not include the key knowledge that pupils should acquire in each subject. Instead, leaders have focused too much on skills alone. Consequently, teachers do not receive clear guidance about what knowledge they should teach in subjects other than mathematics.

Curriculum leadership is in the early stages of development. This is a result of high rates of staff turnover and the high proportion of recently qualified staff at the school. Leaders recognise that there is an urgent need to develop curriculum leaders' subject knowledge so that they can lead their curriculum areas well.

Pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read do not quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident readers. The school's current approach to the teaching of phonics is not effective. Children in early years do not get off to a brisk start in reading. Leaders delay the direct teaching of phonics until the second half of the autumn term. When I observed pupils reading to a familiar adult, they struggled to apply their phonics knowledge when reading unfamiliar words. Reading books are not well matched to pupils' needs. Leaders have selected a new systematic phonics programme that they will put in place from September 2021.

The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. Staff are skilled at matching teaching and support to pupils' individual needs. A special educational needs (SEN) resource base is attached to the school, offering places for up to 10 pupils referred by the local authority. Staff who teach there carefully adapt the curriculum to cater for pupils' academic, social, emotional and mental health needs.

Leaders and staff promote pupils' personal development well. Pupils discussed with me the importance of respecting each other's differences. They receive teaching about a range of faiths and cultures. Pupils are well prepared as future citizens.

Staff have made sure that pupils continue to experience opportunities beyond the classroom, despite the restrictions imposed by COVID-19. For example, some pupils have enjoyed local walks to explore the environment. Others have formed a positive online link with a local care home.

In discussions, staff said that they value leaders' and governors' consideration of their workload and well-being. A typical comment was, 'We are a supportive team. We feel leaders care about our workload.'

In discussion with the headteacher, we agreed that curriculum planning and leadership and the teaching of early reading may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Pupils told me that they 'definitely feel safe'. Regular training keeps safeguarding at the forefront of staff's attention. Governors are equally well trained. They take their safeguarding duties seriously. Leaders have stringent

systems in place for recording and following up concerns, however small. Staff work extensively with external agencies. Employment checks are complete and meet statutory requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not fully planned and sequenced in all subjects, other than in mathematics. It does not set out the precise, subject-specific knowledge that pupils should learn. Therefore, teachers lack clear guidance for what they should teach. Senior leaders should ensure that curriculum plans identify the key knowledge and skills pupils should know, and when.
- Curriculum leadership is in the early stages of development in almost all subjects. Some curriculum areas are led by inexperienced staff. Consequently, those leaders do not have a strong overview of their subjects and lack the expertise required to drive improvement. Senior leaders should ensure that teachers receive the necessary support to develop as effective leaders who will have the knowledge and confidence to monitor the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning.
- The school's current approach to the teaching of early reading and phonics is not effective. Books do not match the sounds that pupils have learned. Phonics teaching does not begin straight away in early years. As a result, pupils do not quickly develop the knowledge and skills required to become successful readers. Senior leaders should ensure that the teaching of early reading and phonics enables pupils to read with accuracy and fluency.

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. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 in July 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 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 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 [here](#).

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	120096
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10195052
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stephen Parker
Headteacher	Suzanne Jones
Website	www.woodcoteprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	6 and 7 July 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since 2019, a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, Cherry Blossom House, has been attached to the school. This caters for up to 10 pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, who are referred by the local authority. There are currently five pupils on roll, attending full time.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school's leaders and have taken that into account in my evaluation of the school.
- I met with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and curriculum leaders. I spoke with the chair of governors and other members of the governing body. I spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- I looked closely at the quality of education in early reading, mathematics and art. This involved speaking with leaders, staff and pupils, and visiting lessons and reviewing samples of pupils' work.

- I inspected safeguarding by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks. I held a meeting with the designated senior leader for safeguarding to discuss the school's policies and procedures. I spoke with pupils and staff to evaluate the school's safeguarding culture.
- I visited the SEN resource base with the SENCo.
- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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