

Inspection of Wells Hall Primary School

Wells Hall Road, Great Cornard, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 0NH

Inspection dates: 14–15 September 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Wells Hall Primary School is a calm and welcoming place where pupils are happy to learn. The school's core values, 'Respect, Responsibility, Resilience', are well understood. Pupils demonstrate these values through the ways they play with their friends and how they learn in the classroom.

Pupils work hard in class. They talk about their learning with enthusiasm. Pupils particularly enjoy reading. They are excited about the variety of books available for them to read. They understand the importance of being a good reader.

Pupils know right from wrong. They say that bullying is rare, but if it does happen, adults will deal with it quickly. Pupils will readily tell adults about any concerns or worries. They can identify a 'trusted' adult whom they could speak to. This helps pupils feel safe while they are at school.

Pupils relish the opportunities to take on different responsibilities. They talk with pride about being house leaders or junior librarians. They believe it is important to set a good example to other pupils across the school.

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

Pupils receive a good quality of education. New senior leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum so pupils can learn across a wide range of carefully planned subjects. All staff have high expectations for what pupils can learn and achieve. Leaders check how well teachers are teaching the curriculum. This ensures that pupils can successfully build their knowledge and skills over time.

Leaders provide high-quality professional development for staff. Staff have a good knowledge of the things they need to teach. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to check what pupils have remembered. Staff take time to address any misconceptions. Pupils recall what they have learned previously and how they use this knowledge to help them when they find out about new things. For example, in history, Year 6 pupils used their knowledge of chronology to build their understanding of how Windrush had an impact on British society.

However, not all teachers are confident with their subject knowledge to deliver leaders' full curriculum plans effectively. They do not make the right choices to adapt plans to meet the needs of all pupils. In mathematics, for example, teachers do not use plans effectively to ensure that all pupils think deeply about their learning.

The teaching of early reading is well organised. From the start of school, children are taught the sounds they need to help them learn to read. Staff want all pupils to be confident and fluent readers. Staff make regular checks of pupils' progress. Pupils who struggle with learning to read are given additional help to catch up quickly. Leaders' investment in books is helping to promote pupils' vocabulary and exposure to a wider range of texts. This is developing their love of reading. As a result, pupils

are developing their fluency and confidence in reading as they move through the school.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) supports teachers to understand how to adapt learning to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND access the same learning as their peers. Well-trained additional adults make an effective contribution so that pupils with SEND achieve well.

Nursery and Reception children settle quickly. Leaders have thoughtfully organised the environment to help children make friends and learn to be independent. Most of the curriculum is well designed. However, there are still some areas of learning, such as understanding the world, where there is insufficient detail and clarity about what children will learn to be well prepared for Year 1. Teachers are not confident about the things children have learned and remembered across all areas of learning

Staff support pupils to develop their understanding of what it means to be a good friend and citizen. Pupils have opportunities to learn about different faiths and communities. Pupils who spoke to inspectors explained how people are different and how we must all learn to live together. Pupils are excited about restarting trips and residential visits and how these opportunities help them to learn more about themselves.

The local board of governors and the trust provide effective support. Despite difficult times in the school's recent history, they have ensured that leaders have remained focused upon school improvement. Leaders are challenged about the decisions they make so that outcomes for pupils are improved.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a culture of care in the school. The school's pastoral team builds strong relationships with pupils and their families. The team is alert to any sudden changes in a pupil's welfare or behaviour. Leaders are tenacious in pursuing the support that vulnerable pupils and their families need.

Leaders ensure that thorough checks are carried out when employing staff or using volunteers. All staff are well trained. They are vigilant for any signs of abuse and understand how to report their concerns. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. A well-planned programme helps pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not fully understand how to deliver leaders' curriculum plans effectively. This leads to some pupils not thinking deeply about their learning. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers are trained and supported, so that they know how to teach all subjects well.
- The curriculum for early years is not fully developed. There are a few areas of learning that do not have sufficient detail about the key knowledge children need to build their understanding. This means that teachers do not have a secure grasp of the order in which they need to plan learning opportunities in these specific areas. Leaders must ensure that all parts of the early years curriculum are fully designed and implemented.

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	144218
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10200555
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	456
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christine Quinn
Headteacher	Ros Towns
Website	www.wellshall.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Wells Hall Primary School is part of the Unity Schools Partnership Multi-Academy Trust (the trust). It joined the trust in July 2017.
- Since the school became an academy, there has been change in the senior leadership of the school. The new headteacher took up her appointment in January 2021. The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2020.
- The school is currently undergoing additional building and refurbishment work to accommodate more pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. They also met with the phonics leader and the leader of early years, who is also the assistant headteacher. Inspectors spoke with the SENCo and subject leaders. Meetings were also held with the chief executive officer of the trust, the former director of learning for primary schools in the trust and members of the local governing board, including the chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history, science and physical education. They visited lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and met with teaching staff and pupils. Inspectors also observed some pupils reading and talked to pupils about their reading habits.
- Inspectors considered a range of school documents, including curriculum plans, the school improvement plan and the school self-evaluation document. They also considered minutes from meetings of the local governing board.
- In order to check on the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors checked the school's record of pre-appointment checks, met the schools designated safeguarding lead, spoke with staff and pupils, and checked the school's child protection records.
- Inspectors considered 88 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 50 free-text responses received during the inspection.
- Inspectors met with staff and reviewed 50 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors considered 58 responses to Ofsted's pupil's online survey. They also observed pupils at play at breaktime and lunchtime, and talked to groups of pupils about their experiences at school.

Inspection team

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