

Inspection of a good school: Widewell Primary Academy

Lulworth Drive, Roborough, Plymouth, Devon PL6 7ER

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 October 2021

Outcome

Widewell Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly and welcoming school. Pupils are happy and full of fun. Many pupils are from military families and do not always complete their schooling at Widewell Primary. Pupils who join during the school year have extra support, so they settle quickly. Pupils say that 'teachers understand us'. Adults and pupils enjoy each other's company. Parents and carers value the attention staff provide to children's well-being.

Pupils work hard and play happily together. They follow the school values of being kind and respectful in all that they do. Pupils behave well in lessons and during social times. They enjoy the wide range of sporting opportunities available to them. The multi-use sports area is a hive of activity at lunch and break times.

Pupils say they feel safe because staff have taught them how to stay safe. This is true, including when using the internet. Pupils are confident that bullying never happens. They say if it did happen, adults would deal with it quickly. Pupils have a strong understanding of how to stay safe.

All staff have high expectations of pupils. They want pupils to do well across the curriculum and enjoy their learning.

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

The recently appointed headteacher wasted no time in getting to know the school and the community it serves. She has an accurate view of the education pupils receive and has ambitious plans to improve the school further.

The mathematics curriculum is well sequenced. Pupils enjoy mathematics. Children get off to a flying start in the early years. Skilful teaching ensures that children quickly establish an understanding of number. This strong start prepares children well for the next stage of their education. Teachers ensure that pupils are secure in their knowledge before moving to the next concept. This helps pupils to know more and remember more. Pupils who find

mathematics challenging have timely and effective support. However, a small minority of pupils spend too long completing work they already know and remember securely. This slows their progress.

Leaders know reading is crucial for pupils' success. Recently, they made changes to improve the reading curriculum. Leaders are determined that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn to read well. Children in the Nursery Year start to learn to read as soon as they are ready. Adults prioritise children's language and communication skills. This means children are well prepared for their Reception Year. Regular checks ensure that any pupil who falls behind has effective additional support. Pupils with SEND who find reading challenging have expert help.

Leaders have invested in new library books that help pupils to develop their understanding of life in modern Britain. Pupils like the books. Older pupils speak with enthusiasm about different authors and books they enjoy. Teachers are strengthening their subject knowledge with the support of the local English hub. However, due to COVID-19, some staff have not been able to secure the professional development they need to develop their understanding of the new approach to phonics. This means that there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Leaders know this and have plans in place to ensure that all staff are well trained.

Leaders have recently developed the computing curriculum. This is carefully planned and well sequenced. In the early years, adults encourage children to be confident when using technology. Pupils' understanding of computing develops well across the school. This leads to some pupils having strong knowledge and skills. Pupils enjoy learning about computing. However, some teaching is not based on secure knowledge about what pupils can already do. This means that for some pupils, the computing curriculum is not as ambitious as it could be. As a result, these pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.

Leaders ensure that pupils have broad experiences that prepare them for life in modern Britain. Leaders have thought carefully about how pupils develop their knowledge of different faiths and cultures. The curriculum is enhanced by many trips and visits. Pupils particularly enjoy outdoor learning and residential weeks. They say it helps them to be more independent and resilient.

Staff morale is high. They appreciate the efforts leaders make to look after their well-being. Widewell Primary is a happy place to work and learn.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including local governors, ensure that there are effective systems in place to safeguard pupils. Staff have regular training and understand their safeguarding responsibilities well. Leaders make all the required checks on adults who work with pupils in the school. Leaders work closely and effectively with other agencies. They ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families get the help they need in a timely manner. All parents

who responded to the online survey, Parent View, said that their children feel safe at school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Due to the pandemic, some staff have not been able to access appropriate professional development. This means that they have not been able to strengthen their knowledge of teaching phonics. As a result, the teaching of reading is inconsistent in some areas of the school. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff receive appropriate professional development to strengthen their subject knowledge.
- In some subjects, teachers' expectations of what some pupils can achieve are not always high enough. Teachers do not always use their knowledge about what pupils can already do, well enough. This limits what some pupils can achieve. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is ambitious for all pupils.

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, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 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 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	139289
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10193260
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stuart Jones
Headteacher	Vicky Broughton
Website	www.widewellprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 May 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher started in September 2021.
- The school has an on-site pre-school provision. It is managed by the governing body.
- There are breakfast and after-school clubs for pupils who attend the school.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and took this into account in his evaluation.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the chief executive, and teaching and support staff.
- The inspector met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, he met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum

plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, looked at samples of pupils' work and listened to pupils read.

- The inspector examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and documentation relating to attendance.
- The inspector scrutinised safeguarding records, tested staff's safeguarding knowledge and spoke with pupils. The inspector also met with the designated safeguarding leader.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. He also took into consideration the responses to the survey for staff.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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