

Inspection of a good school: Watchfield Primary School

North Street, Watchfield, Oxfordshire SN6 8SD

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 October 2021

Outcome

Watchfield Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Watchfield is a unique community. It predominately educates service children from the UK and overseas. Children arrive from 40 countries and 30 languages are spoken. Many do not speak English when they start at Watchfield. Remarkably, you would not know this because pupils settle so quickly. This is down to leaders' successes in integrating all pupils well into the Watchfield family.

Pupils say they love making friends from all over the world and that these new friends teach them greetings in different languages. There is much happiness at Watchfield. Each September, staff ensure there is time to help pupils learn to socialise and interact positively with each other. They teach pupils the common routines to help everyone know how to behave. Pupils learn about bullying and how to ask an adult for help. All of this contributes to pupils feeling safe and protected.

Despite the challenges of children coming from different international education systems, leaders make no excuses and are aspirational for all. They ensure that pupils learn well and aim high across the curriculum. Furthermore, leaders plan special enrichment opportunities to enable pupils to develop their character and talents.

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

Historically, phonics attainment has been very low. Leaders have addressed this by introducing a new rigorous and highly effective phonics programme. Staff set high expectations for children early in Reception. Children are remembering the sounds they have learned so far. They can sit correctly at a table with the correct posture for developing pencil grip. This helps the children with forming the letters of the sounds they know.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hampered leaders' plans to train all staff comprehensively to deliver the full phonics programme, including how best to help the weakest readers catch up. Currently, not all the reading books are in place for the programme. Leaders are

aware of all of this and, in the interim, are checking that staff teach phonics in a consistent way and that pupils read books that match sounds.

The curriculum is newly developed in many subjects. It is ambitious and well thought out to recognise the unique context of the school. In mathematics plans, key knowledge is clearly set out. At the end of a unit of work, assessment is well matched to finding out what pupils know and remember from the taught lessons. However, in some subjects, leaders have not yet precisely identified the essential knowledge that pupils need to know from early years to Year 6. Sometimes, this can lead to teachers planning activities that do not enable pupils to learn what they need to know.

Nonetheless, teachers know their subjects well. They cater effectively for the range of language needs in classes by explaining concepts simply. Teachers build pupils' vocabulary with frequent practice. In early years, staff plan activities carefully to help children develop their language and social skills with each other. The outdoor environment is well designed to enable children to explore through play and practise what staff need them to know and do.

The new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has quickly got to grips with what could be better. She has strengthened how staff identify and meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. She has listened to parents and supported staff to fully include all pupils. In lessons, adults working one-to-one with children provide the right support to help children learn the same content as their peers.

The school's new 'strive for five' behaviour expectations are helping pupils to focus well in class and not be distracted by others. In early years, children practise consistent routines that help them move calmly from the carpet to the table to maximise learning time. Across the school, leaders have put effective strategies in place to help any children with emotional and/or behavioural needs learn better in class.

Leaders have really thought about how to unify the school community through teaching a broad curriculum. For example, the school's annual international week celebrates pupils' heritage. There is a carefully planned 'character map' that enables pupils to 'soar': be successful, original, aspirational and resilient. Pupils show respect and tolerance to each other.

With the recent changes in school leadership, trustees and leaders have engaged well with staff to explain the new direction of the school. Where possible, leaders look to reduce staff workload so that teachers can focus their efforts on teaching pupils well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The well-trained safeguarding team meets weekly to discuss the welfare of children and any concerns that may have been raised. Leaders are mindful that they need to teach all children about UK laws, for example travelling on the left side of the road. Leaders induct parents from overseas into understanding the safeguarding laws of this country.

Leaders are proactive and persistent in ensuring other agencies, including the military, listen to concerns they may have. Procedures for the safer recruitment of adults are robust. The headteacher knows how to handle any safeguarding concerns about adults.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all staff are fully trained to teach the school's phonics programme. This means that some are not sure how to make best use of time when supporting pupils who need to catch up. Leaders need to ensure that every member of staff is well trained to deliver the phonics programme and to provide effective, additional one-to-one support for the weakest readers.
- In some subjects, the essential knowledge that pupils need to know is not clearly identified and sequenced step by step from early years to Year 6. Consequently, pupils do not know and remember enough of the taught content. Leaders are in the process of planning the key knowledge in each subject. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 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	140301
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10200049
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	382
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Liz Holmes
Headteacher	Georgina Wintle
Website	www.watchfieldprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed substantive headteacher in February 2020. Previously, she had been acting headteacher and deputy headteacher at the school. In September 2021, a new deputy headteacher and a new SENCo started.
- Half of pupils on the school roll are service children and a quarter are international service children. Some of the staff are linked to the Armed Forces. Therefore, mobility is extremely high and each new academic year, half of the pupils on roll are brand new to the school, along with some teaching staff.
- The school works closely with the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom which is situated close by.
- The school is not currently using any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation.

- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and a range of school staff. He also met with trust leaders, including the chief executive officer, the chair of trustees and the chair of the local governing body.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector spoke with staff and pupils. He met with members of the designated safeguarding team to examine their knowledge, records and actions. This included reviewing checks on the safer recruitment of staff. He sampled case files to explore how the school identifies and supports pupils at risk of harm.
- The lead inspector spoke to pupils from different year groups and considered 52 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- The views of staff, including 32 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey, were considered.
- The 40 responses to Ofsted's Parent View, including 30 written responses, were also taken into account.
- The lead inspector did deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. This involved discussion with leaders about these subjects and the curriculum plans, visits to lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work, and discussions with pupils, teachers and teaching assistants from the lessons visited about the subjects.

Inspection team

James Broadbridge, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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