

Inspection of a good school: The John Wesley Church of England Methodist Voluntary Aided Primary School

Wesley School Road, Cuckoo Lane, Singleton, Ashford, Kent TN23 5LW

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 November 2021

Outcome

The John Wesley Church of England Methodist Voluntary Aided Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring, nurturing school where pupils thrive and flourish. Pupils' well-being has a very high priority. Strong relationships and a commitment to include everyone means that pupils feel well cared for and secure. As one pupil said of teachers, 'We trust them and they trust us.'

Pupils are very happy to come to school and enjoy their learning. They say that teachers make learning fun, and that they 'take time with us to explain things so that we understand'. They know that teachers expect them to do their best and work hard. Pupils behave well. They are friendly and polite and treat each other, adults and the school dogs, which they love, with respect.

Pupils feel safe in school. They understand what bullying is. They say, 'It hardly ever happens here.' However, if it does, they are confident to talk to staff and know they will be listened to. Leaders deal with any concerns about bullying promptly and fairly.

Pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (specially resourced provision) play a full and active part in school life. They confidently learn alongside their classmates in their base classrooms, as well as attending lessons in the provision.

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

The school continues to provide a good quality of education. Leaders have designed an ambitious and broad curriculum. The curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced so that teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. It clearly sets out the knowledge and skills for pupils to learn at each stage, how they will be taught and the intended outcomes for pupils' achievement. Staff are quick to identify the needs of pupils with

special educational needs and/or disabilities and they provide high-quality support. Suitable adjustments are made to make sure that these pupils learn the same curriculum as others and experience success.

The curriculum has not yet been in place for an uninterrupted year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it has not been possible for senior leaders to check its effectiveness over time by evaluating how successfully it is helping pupils to remember their learning and reach the clearly defined outcomes. Curriculum and phase leaders are enhancing their leadership skills and capacity. This is so that they can carefully check on how effectively and consistently the curriculum is being taught over time and if their work is making a difference to pupils' learning.

There is a strong staff team who are reflective about their practice. They are involved in research and professional training to further their skills to enable them to do the very best for their pupils. Curriculum leaders have good subject knowledge. They and the phase leaders provide very helpful support and guidance for staff.

Pupils are very friendly, polite and happy to share their views. They live up to the school's and Christian values, which underpins all the school does. They show this through their conduct, attitudes and behaviour. They work very well together because they respect each other and listen to others' opinions even though they may disagree with them. Leaders are aware that there is scope to make more productive use of the outdoor space in the early years. This is so that children can further develop their positive attitudes through play, exploration, imaginative learning and creativity. There are plans in place for this.

Language and vocabulary learning are important throughout the school. They start in the Reception Year where children acquire a love of stories and rhymes. The teaching of phonics is well organised. Pupils read books that match the sounds they are learning. Teachers' regular assessments show if any pupils are falling behind and extra support is provided to help them catch up. Pupils develop a love of reading during their time in school. Teachers read to pupils regularly, which introduces pupils to a wide range of diverse and challenging texts. By the time they leave, the majority are fluent, independent readers.

Early mathematical skills are developed through practical and stimulating activities that deepen pupils' understanding. For example, as well as counting numbers, children in Reception are taught to recognise how many things are in a group, without counting them one by one.

The headteacher and deputy are unwavering in their determination to provide the best possible experiences for pupils and their families. Pupils' personal attributes and skills, alongside their academic achievements, stand them in good stead for later life.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Staff are well trained. They are alert to any causes for concern and quickly identify pupils who may need help and protection. Swift support is given in school. Leaders seek advice from specialist services where appropriate. Leaders' work, including that of the family liaison officer, is key in securing vital support for vulnerable pupils and their families. There are rigorous risk assessments to ensure, for example, that pupils are safe in the forest school. Record-keeping and checks on adults who work in the school are well organised and efficient.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While pupils achieve well overall, it is too soon for senior leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum to make sure that it is enabling pupils to achieve as well as they can. To ensure that this can happen over time, curriculum and phase leaders need to build on their leadership skills so they can monitor the curriculum implementation. They should evaluate how well pupils are remembering their learning and how successfully pupils are working towards the clearly defined end points. Leaders should secure consistency in curriculum implementation across the school. They should also evaluate the impact of their work to ensure it is making a difference.

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 November 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	133627
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10200340
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	451
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Caroline Rae
Headteacher	Rachael Harrington
Website	www.john-wesley.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school's last inspection under section 48 of the Education Act was in June 2017.
- The headteacher was appointed in April 2019. The extended leadership team was restructured in September 2021 to provide additional leadership capacity.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with speech, language and communication needs. There are currently nine pupils in this provision in a key stage 1 or key stage 2 class. All the pupils have an education, health and care plan. The pupils frequently join their peers for learning in their base classes.
- The school hosts a specialist early years foundation stage observation and assessment class, which is run by the local special school, Wyvern. There are eight children who are from local Ashford schools. John Wesley works in partnership with these schools to ensure that the children are able to move into mainstream Year 1 classes.

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 has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and curriculum leaders.
- A meeting was held with four members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of the governors. The inspector also held a meeting with the local authority school improvement adviser.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also looked at other subject plans, observed some pupils reading to teaching assistants and visited the specially resourced provision. Pupils were observed at lunchtime and in the playground, and the inspector spoke informally to different groups of pupils.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and two of the deputy safeguarding leads, looked at the single central record of recruitment checks and safeguarding records and talked informally to pupils and staff.
- The inspector considered 46 responses to the confidential questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 28 free-text comments. She also took account of 42 responses to the confidential staff questionnaire and 144 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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