

Inspection of a good school: Westvale Primary School

Melverley Road, Westvale, Kirkby, Liverpool, Merseyside L32 0RQ

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 November 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils receive a warm welcome each day from the staff at Westvale Primary School. Pupils said that the school is special because everyone knows each other. They know that the staff care about them. This helps pupils to feel safe. Pupils are confident that if they reported any concerns, including any worries about bullying, staff would help them. Most parents and carers echo the views of their children.

Pupils understand that staff expect them to do their best. Pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are keen to be involved during lessons, and they enjoy learning.

Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They talked about the importance of being kind. They know that respect for all is important.

Pupils are eager to take advantage of the wide range of clubs on offer, such as drama, gymnastics and basketball. Pupils talked excitedly about the exhibition that they have created in school with the help of a local art gallery.

Despite these positive features, leaders have not ensured that pupils get off to a strong enough start in learning to read. This prevents some pupils from becoming confident and fluent readers as quickly as they should. It also hinders their achievement across the curriculum.

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

Leaders have planned a curriculum that is broad, balanced and suitably ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with SEND. In most subjects, leaders have identified the important knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which they should learn it.

Subject leaders provide appropriate guidance for teachers that helps them to understand how to build on pupils' previous learning when introducing new ideas. Leaders have carefully adjusted some plans to help pupils catch up with missed learning following the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, in mathematics leaders have introduced additional opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their number skills.

While leaders have planned curriculums well across the school, in some subjects, their planning and guidance does not consider carefully enough what pupils have learned in the early years. In these subjects, teachers are not as clear about what children in the early years should know and can do. This hinders teachers in key stage 1 from designing learning that builds on what pupils already know.

Leaders ensure that older pupils develop their comprehension skills and a love of reading through a carefully planned reading curriculum. Pupils are enthusiastic about the high-quality books that they have studied in class and how this approach helps them to become confident and independent readers.

Children begin to learn sounds and letters soon after they start in the Reception class. However, until recently, leaders' expectations of what pupils, including children in the early years, should be able to achieve in reading were not high enough. This meant that too many pupils have been unable to read fluently and accurately by the end of Year 2.

Recently, leaders have introduced a new approach to the teaching of phonics. Staff now select books carefully for pupils that are matched to the sounds that they know. This has helped pupils to develop their confidence in reading. However, not all staff have been fully trained to deliver the programme. This means that there are still inconsistencies in how well the early reading curriculum is delivered. Added to this, the quality of the support provided by staff to those pupils who need to catch up with their reading also varies.

Leaders have reviewed and improved their systems to identify and provide support for pupils with SEND. Teachers adapt their approaches so that pupils with SEND access a full curriculum. Pupils are given additional support to help manage their emotions and behaviour when they need it. Low-level disruption during lessons is rare. This means that teachers can focus on delivering the curriculum.

Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the world beyond their school and local community. Through the curriculum, and in assemblies, pupils learn about different faiths and families. Leaders plan a broad range of trips and visits to enrich pupils' learning.

Staff appreciate leaders' consideration of their workload and well-being. Governors have supported school leaders to ensure that staff and pupils have suitable resources available to teach and learn. However, governors are not as informed as they should be about the quality of education for pupils or how well pupils learn the intended curriculum.

In discussion with the acting headteacher, the inspector agreed that early reading may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders arrange regular safeguarding training so that staff remain alert to the potential signs of pupils who may be at risk of harm, including from sexual harassment. Staff understand the procedures that they must follow if they have concerns about a pupil.

Parents said that staff are approachable. The members of the school's safeguarding team know pupils and their families well. This ensures that vulnerable pupils benefit from appropriate specialist support when necessary.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe online. Leaders have organised workshops with police officers so that pupils understand some of the risks in the wider community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Until recently, leaders have not developed an ambitious and well-sequenced phonics curriculum. At this point in time, leaders have not ensured that all appropriate adults have been trained in the new phonics programme. This means that too few pupils become fluent and confident readers by the end of Year 2. Leaders should ensure that all staff involved in supporting pupils, including children in the early years, to learn to read are well trained. This is to ensure that the programme is delivered consistently well, pupils are accurately assessed, and they are given the help they need to catch up quickly.
- In some subjects, leaders have not considered carefully enough how the curriculum in key stage 1 builds on children's learning in the early years. This prevents pupils in key stage 1 from making connections in their learning and building on what they know already. Leaders should ensure that expectations for pupils' learning in these subjects consider children's learning in the early years so that teachers can design learning that builds on pupils' prior knowledge.
- Members of the governing body have not ensured that they are well informed about the quality of education that pupils receive. This means that they are unable to hold leaders to account as well as they should. Governors should ensure that they have the information they need to support and challenge leaders about pupils' achievement across the curriculum.

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 July 2012.

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	104431
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10211042
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hooshang Rahmani
Acting Headteacher	Julie Haywood
Website	www.westvaleprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There has been a small reduction in the number of pupils on roll since the previous inspection.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This is the first routine inspection that the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken this into account in her evaluation.
- The inspector spoke with the acting headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of staff. She also spoke with pupils about their work and wider aspects of school life. The inspector met with members of the governing body and had a face to face discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding, including the employment checks undertaken when staff are appointed.

- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View. The inspector also considered responses to Ofsted’s online survey for staff and responses to Ofsted’s online pupils’ survey.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into early reading, art and mathematics. This involved discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visits to lessons, reviewing pupils work and the curriculum plans and listening to pupils read.

Inspection team

Janette Walker, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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