

Inspection of a good school: Wimbish Primary School

Tye Green, Wimbish, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 2XE

Inspection date: 5 May 2022

Outcome

Wimbish Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Wimbish Primary, a renewed ethos states that learning is for 'all pupils, no matter what their starting points'. This commitment is clear from the opportunities that pupils have across the curriculum. A feature of the school, and reflective of its local context, is that many pupils start school at different stages of their primary education. This is not seen as a barrier. Clear systems are in place to make sure pupils feel welcome and can make a rapid start with their learning. All pupils benefit from the shared high expectation that they can all succeed.

Pupils report that their views and ideas are listened to. This is supporting pupils to have confidence in their own voice. They are assured that staff will listen to them if they have a concern. Although pupils view bullying incidents as unusual, they are confident that an adult would help them.

Pupils learn in environments that are safe. They have fun, and benefit from structured activities in their outside spaces. Pupils have benefited from recent ambitious changes to the behaviour expectations in school. Pupils' positive behaviour choices are praised. They also understand there are consequences if their conduct falls below the expected standard.

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

Leaders, with the support of the interim executive board (IEB), have been proactive in making improvements across the school. They have used every opportunity to critically review practices and routines. This has led to many changes to make sure all pupils are safe and experience a good quality of education, regardless of their needs.

Leaders have set out very detailed curriculum thinking about the knowledge pupils will gain over their time at Wimbish Primary. They have thought carefully to make sure that all pupils can be included and can succeed. From the moment pupils start in early years, they start building a secure body of important knowledge. This includes the phonics

knowledge they need to begin to read. Pupils are given books to practise reading that are matched well to the sounds they have learned. This is helping them build confidence when starting to read.

Leaders work closely with staff to ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are precisely identified and catered for. As a result, pupils with additional barriers to their learning access the full curriculum, alongside their peers. This includes pupils with SEND.

Throughout the curriculum, teachers demonstrate a secure and growing body of specialist knowledge. This is helping pupils to succeed with their learning. Teachers typically provide regular opportunities for pupils to draw on what they remember. Pupils practise using knowledge they have learned in new contexts. This helps them become fluent and retrieve important information with ease. There are a few aspects of the curriculum where these opportunities are less established. Where this is the case, pupils have less confidence and knowledge to draw upon to recall what they have learned.

The assessments teachers complete provide information that informs future learning. If teachers identify gaps in what pupils know, these are quickly addressed. For example, pupils who need more support with reading receive additional time to practise. They also read regularly to an adult in school. Pupils enjoy reading opportunities in school. They show interest when discussing the books made available to them in their classrooms and in the library.

Leaders have considered wider opportunities that pupils need to be successful. A programme of nurture and enrichment opportunities is available for pupils. These provide targeted, extra-curricular experiences that aim to build confidence and self-esteem. An investment in the use of positive language results in constructive interactions between staff and pupils. It is also supporting pupils' social development. Consequently, pupils can effectively use an increasing vocabulary to describe how they are feeling.

The IEB has established a professional work environment where staff are trusted and supported. This has created an atmosphere where staff can develop their practice. The IEB is working closely with leaders to finalise plans for the future. There is a clear commitment to establish a permanent solution for leadership and governance in the school. Leaders, including members of the IEB, are alert to the importance of this transition. They want to ensure that improvements in the school are sustained.

The past 18 months have been a turbulent time for all stakeholders. During inspection, a significant minority of parents shared their feelings of frustration. These reflect concerns about the lack of communication regarding changes that have happened. Leaders are very aware of these concerns. They show a commitment to continue to improve the engagement of parents and rebuild trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have prioritised actions to make sure safeguarding has a high profile. High-quality, regular training for all staff ensures they all play an effective role. Systems for recording and monitoring concerns are effective.

Leaders are swift in following up concerns. They show determination when seeking external professional support. They want to make sure that pupils get the specific help they need to be safe.

The curriculum supports pupils effectively to ensure they are aware of any potential risks, for example when accessing the internet or being out and about alone. Pupils demonstrate that they are confident to use their voice and say if they are worried or do not feel safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few areas of the curriculum, pupils do not have frequent enough opportunities to practise recalling the important knowledge they have previously learned. As a result, pupils have less confidence in fluently recalling knowledge in these subjects. Leaders should make sure that teachers provide regular opportunities, across the breadth of the curriculum, for pupils to retrieve and practise using important knowledge. Lessons should support pupils to remember and draw upon what they have previously learned with ease.
- The current arrangements for governance are effective, but not permanent. Leaders, including the IEB, should work with continued urgency to ensure that a transition to a sustainable and high-quality governance model is well managed, and in place as soon as possible. This is to ensure that the established effective routines for school improvement are maintained and built upon.

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 December 2011.

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	114990
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10200215
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Jill Pullen
Acting head of school	Natasha Bartram
Website	www.wimbish.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 December 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is currently being managed by an IEB, which was put in place in March 2021 to address concerns with school improvement.
- An established member of staff has stepped into the acting head of school role in the absence of the substantive headteacher. They are currently being supported by the local authority and an experienced executive headteacher.
- There is a before- and after-school childcare provision on the school site, which is managed by those responsible for governance.
- A high proportion of the pupils in the school are service children.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision to meet the needs of pupils.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the acting head of school and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. A meeting was also held with the school effectiveness partner from the local authority and a behaviour consultant the school is working with.
- The lead inspector met with three members of the IEB, including the chair of the board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in three subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum documentation, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the acting head of school, who is the school's designated safeguarding leader, and other staff to discuss safeguarding.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including curriculum plans, school development plans, safeguarding records and behaviour records.
- Inspectors considered 23 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 23 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the five responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors also spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons, to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school. Inspectors also observed the behaviour of pupils across the school site.

Inspection team

Kristian Hewitt, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Russell Ayling

Ofsted Inspector

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