

Inspection of Weaverham Forest Primary School

Forest Street, Weaverham, Northwich Cheshire CW8 3EY

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 June 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Weaverham Forest Primary School. Most parents and carers share pupils' positive view of the school. As one parent said, 'It's a very friendly, positive place. Our children love it here'. Pupils have strong relationships with the caring and welcoming staff.

Pupils are polite. They are respectful of others, regardless of any differences. Pupils know what leaders expect of them. They behave well. They feel safe in all parts of the school. In the playground they have plenty of fun activities to enjoy. Pupils, including children in the early years, look after each other. They trust that if bullying should happen, staff would deal with it quickly.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. They have designed a curriculum that pupils value. Pupils are motivated by the projects that they complete. They enjoy their lessons and achieve well. Pupils are keen to talk about their learning.

Pupils like the responsibilities that they are given by their teachers, for example, as sports leaders, school councillors and reading buddies. They enjoy leading projects to reduce the school's impact on the environment. For instance, pupils arranged recycling of the pens that they use in lessons.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum. They have set out the knowledge that they want pupils to learn in each subject. This helps pupils to secure their learning and make links between ideas. For example, in a Year 4 geography topic, pupils used what they know about the seasons and climate to understand why whales move towards or away from the equator to find food.

In most subjects, pupils' learning follows the expectations that leaders have set out. Pupils' knowledge builds securely in well-ordered steps. In these subjects, pupils achieve well. In a small number of subjects, leaders have not ensured that pupils build their learning in a logical way. In these subjects, teachers sometimes ask pupils to complete activities that do not build on what pupils already know. Where this is the case, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

There is a strong culture of reading in the school. Leaders ensure that pupils develop a love for reading. Pupils enjoy reading a wide range of books from different authors. Leaders regularly review books to add to the school library for pupils to enjoy.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained to teach reading. The daily phonics sessions are well structured. Leaders make sure that the books that pupils read match the letters and sounds that they are learning. If pupils fall behind in learning phonics, staff provide them with effective extra support to help them catch up.

Leaders ensure that pupils develop the reading skills necessary to succeed in their future learning. Most pupils develop as confident and fluent readers.

The early years classes prepare children well for the next stage of their education. This includes the provision for two-year-old children. Children learn to take turns and play together. Staff develop children's communication skills by talking with them about their experiences. Children learn songs and nursery rhymes to develop their vocabulary.

Leaders are quick to identify where pupils need extra help, including those who are disadvantaged. They provide support so that pupils do not fall behind. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified quickly by leaders when they join the school. These pupils follow the same curriculum as their peers. A few pupils rely too much on adults and this hinders their independence. Despite this, pupils with SEND achieve well. However, some parents of pupils with SEND do not feel that their concerns are listened to. They said that they do not feel that school staff work in partnership with them.

Pupils behave well during lessons and around the school. This means that learning is rarely interrupted. Most pupils attend school very regularly. They value their learning. However, a small number of pupils are absent too frequently. These pupils miss important aspects of their learning. Leaders' actions to improve these pupils' attendance lack urgency.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. Pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe. Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to learn about different cultures and religions. For example, pupils spoke with enthusiasm about what they learned from the Sikh and Islamic visitors to the school.

The staff with whom inspectors spoke said that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being.

Governors know the school well. They understand the school's strengths and what needs to improve. They make good use of external partners' assessments of the school to check the work of leaders. Governors work with curriculum leaders to assure themselves that pupils receive a good quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders, including governors, ensure that the safety and well-being of pupils are given a high priority. Staff are well trained, which helps them to spot any signs that pupils may be at risk from harm. Staff are confident to raise any concerns with leaders, so that pupils get prompt help if needed. Leaders draw on the support of outside agencies to keep pupils safe. They follow up concerns tenaciously to ensure that pupils get the right support.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders do not ensure that pupils build their learning in a logical sequence. This prevents pupils from learning as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that teachers have clear guidance about what to teach and when to teach it.
- Leaders do not respond to the decline in pupils' attendance rates soon enough. Consequently, these pupils miss too much of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that they take timely action when pupils' rates of attendance drop, in order to reduce the impact of absence on pupils' learning.
- The partnership between school staff and parents of pupils with SEND is not as strong as it could be. This means that some parents do not believe that their concerns are taken into account or that the support for their children is effective enough. Leaders should ensure that they forge effective partnerships with parents of pupils with SEND, to ensure that these pupils get the best possible support.

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	111054
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10226298
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Rushton
Headteacher	David Erne
Website	www.weaverhamforest.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Weaverham Forest Primary School has increased in size since the last inspection due to the opening of the Nursery in 2019.
- The school runs an after-school club.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 considered a range of documentation shared by leaders, including the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's self-evaluation document.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, geography and art and design. They considered the

curriculum documentation, met with curriculum leaders and visited lessons. They reviewed pupils' work in these subjects, as well as speaking with teachers and pupils. They also observed pupils reading to a member of staff.

- Inspectors spoke with the chair of governors and other members of the governing body. They spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders and curriculum leaders, teachers and support staff. Meetings were held with a representative of the local authority and the school improvement partner.
- To judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including safeguarding records, behaviour records, attendance records and reports from governors.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors spoke with a number of parents to gather their views.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally during breaktimes and observed pupils playing. They collected the views of different groups of pupils and talked about their learning.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil or staff surveys.

Inspection team

Keith Pullen, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kathy Nichol	Ofsted Inspector
Lindy Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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