

Inspection of Witney Community Primary School

Hailey Road, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1HL

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending school and describe this as a friendly and welcoming place to be. They know that everyone is different and that this is a good thing. Pupils regularly take part in fundraising activities to support other people. They explain that by supporting others in this way, they are reflecting the school's value of philanthropy.

Most pupils get on well with each other, behave sensibly and rise to staff's high expectations. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and supportive. Pupils say that there is rarely any bullying. They feel safe and are confident that staff quickly sort out any issues or upsets. Pupils like the way that staff encourage them not to 'bottle-up' any worries. They understand that this supports their mental health.

Leaders and staff want pupils to achieve their best and enjoy school. They aspire to fulfil the school's motto, 'caring, learning and succeeding together'. A strong foundation in early years gets children off to a good start to their education. Overall, pupils are doing well. However, leaders have not ensured that safeguarding is effective. Until the inspection, they did not understand the potential risks to pupils because of some weaknesses in the school's safeguarding arrangements.

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

Trustees and governors have not ensured that they fulfil their statutory safeguarding responsibilities. Until the inspection, they were unaware of significant weaknesses in the school's arrangements. Trustees and governors keep appropriate oversight of the school's finances.

Leaders have worked with determination to strengthen the quality of education. They have given priority to refining the curriculum and teaching approaches in English, mathematics and science. Their hard work and sound thinking have paid off. This has led to greater consistency and pupils are achieving well.

Rightly, leaders are now refining the curriculum and assessment processes in other subjects. Until recently, content has not been precise enough in some subjects, such as art and design and modern foreign languages. This has led to some inconsistencies, and pupils have not achieved as well as they do in other subjects.

Reading is a priority at the school. Staff in Reception and key stage 1 closely follow the school's phonics programme. This helps most pupils to get off to a good start to their reading. If any pupils are finding reading tricky, staff get to the root of the problem and address pupils' specific difficulties. Most pupils are doing well. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, some pupils in key stage 1 have lost ground with reading. Staff are supporting these pupils to help them to catch up quickly.

From Nursery to Year 6, staff promote a love of reading. Children in early years delight in joining in with their favourite action-packed songs, stories and rhymes. Attractive reading areas entice them to read. Across the school, staff immerse pupils in high-quality texts. Older pupils enjoy reading interesting texts that extend their vocabulary and enhance their understanding. These texts also support pupils' learning in the wider curriculum.

Staff make learning interesting and do all they can to 'hook' pupils and engage them in lively discussions. Every lesson starts with a recap to help pupils reconnect with previous learning. Staff ensure that any additional needs are identified as soon as pupils join the school. They support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well.

Leaders are ambitious to broaden pupils' horizons and raise their aspirations. Visits to places of interest enrich the curriculum, bring learning to life and contribute to pupils' enjoyment. Pupils enjoy the many sporting clubs on offer. Older pupils like the chance to be play leaders and help younger pupils during lunchtime.

Leaders have improved behaviour at the school. However, they do not analyse behaviour or attendance well enough or connect this with other information about pupils' well-being.

Staff like working at the school and feel that leaders are considerate of their well-being and professional development. The majority of parents are positive about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders have a weak understanding of some safeguarding procedures. They have not exercised sufficient leadership or oversight of safeguarding. Responsibilities are unclear. Leaders have not completed any checks on some volunteers. They did not understand that this poses a potential risk to pupils. Some risk assessments, such as those for swimming, are not fit for purpose.

Some staff have not had all the necessary training. However, staff know how to identify and refer any concerns about pupils. When needed, the safeguarding team shares these with the local authority. The school's pastoral team provides effective early help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not exercised sufficient leadership or oversight of safeguarding. They do not understand or fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Roles and responsibilities are unclear. Leaders need to improve their own knowledge of

safeguarding, including their understanding of the role of designated leader. They need to ensure that responsibilities for all aspects of safeguarding are clearly defined.

- Leaders have not ensured that safeguarding is effective. This includes missing checks on volunteers and inadequate risk assessments for swimming. Leaders need to urgently address these significant weaknesses in the school's arrangements. They must ensure that no adults are able to work or volunteer in the school until the appropriate checks and risk assessments have been completed.
- Trustees and governors have not fulfilled their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding. They have not maintained sufficient oversight of all aspects of safeguarding and ensured that safeguarding is effective. Trustees and governors need to implement robust systems to enable them to accurately evaluate all aspects of safeguarding. They need to ensure that they maintain strategic oversight of this aspect of the school's work.
- Leaders' analysis of behaviour and attendance is not as strong as it needs to be. They do not identify patterns and trends clearly enough or connect these with other information about pupils' well-being. Leaders need to strengthen this aspect of their work.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, some pupils in key stage 1 have lost ground in their reading and are behind the expected stage in the school's phonics programme. Leaders need to continue their strong focus on helping these pupils to catch up as quickly as possible.
- In some foundation subjects, such as modern foreign languages and art and design, leaders are still in the process of refining the curriculum and establishing assessment processes. Consequently, the curriculum is not implemented as well as it is in other subjects and pupils' learning is not as secure. Leaders need to continue their work to refine the curriculum and assessment processes. They need to ensure that they identify and sequence the precise knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember in all curriculum areas and subjects.

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	145651
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10238326
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kirsten Robinson
Headteacher	Mark Peacey
Website	https://www.witneycp.org/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in April 2018. When its predecessor school, Witney Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The school is one of 28 primary and secondary schools in the River Learning Trust. The board of trustees has delegated many strategic responsibilities to the school's local governing body. This is outlined in the trust's scheme of delegation. The trust remains the responsible body for this school.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2021. There have been many staffing changes in recent years.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school has nursery provision for two- and three-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement,

because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- 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 carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, talked with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at a sample of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects and heard some pupils read.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector met with two senior leaders from the trust. She held a meeting with five members of the governing body. The chair of the board of trustees joined this meeting remotely via an audio link.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the school's procedures, records and policies, including records of recruitment checks and checks on volunteers working in the school. Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff. The lead inspector met with the designated leader for safeguarding and the home-school link worker. She held a telephone discussion with the local authority's designated officer for safeguarding. The lead inspector visited the school's swimming pool.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views through their responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' free-text comments. An inspector spoke with some parents at the end of the first day of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff during meetings with them. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's confidential staff survey.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views through meetings with them and at other times of the day, such as during visits to lessons and during lunchtime.

Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kirstine Boon

Ofsted Inspector

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