

Inspection of Westcott Church of England School

High Street, Westcott, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP18 0PH

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Because Westcott Church of England School is so small, pupils all know one another really well and they value their strong friendships. Pupils generally behave well around school. They get along well with one another. If pupils have a falling-out, teachers help them to sort it out quickly. Pupils feel safe, unaware that staff are not all well equipped to respond appropriately if they are at risk of harm.

Pupils do not enjoy learning, however. They do not find the curriculum, or their lessons, interesting. Pupils are not expected to work hard. The school's house-point incentive is rarely used. Pupils do not understand what they are expected to do to receive this reward. The expectations staff have, for what all pupils are capable of achieving, are not high enough.

There are limited experiences on offer to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils do not learn enough about diversity and difference. Some pupils have a very limited understanding of how to keep themselves safe when online. Pupils in Year 6 are anxious about going to secondary school. They do not feel that school has helped them to be prepared for this next step in their education. Pupils are not prepared for life in modern Britain.

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

There are significant weaknesses in the school's curriculum. For most subjects, leaders have not decided the precise knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn and when. In some subjects, schemes of work have been introduced. These are not followed by all teachers. Pupils experience a jumbled curriculum.

Interim leaders have made the teaching of early reading a priority. All staff now follow a structured phonics scheme. Interim leaders have trained all staff and there is now a consistent approach to teaching phonics. However, staff are not trained well enough to make sure that the teaching of phonics is of a consistently high quality.

Leaders have started to organise pupils' reading books so that they match the sequence of learning in phonics. This has not been completed. Because of this, sometimes younger pupils are given books they struggle to read. Reading in key stage 2 is not taught well. Older pupils are not given enough practice to help them become confident, fluent readers.

Teachers do not check carefully enough what pupils have remembered in different subjects. They do not always put in place additional help if pupils need it. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not given the support they need to successfully participate in lessons. Leaders and teachers do not plan well enough to meet these pupils' needs.

Pupils often lose interest during lessons. They become distracted and chat to their classmates. Sometimes, teachers are quick to address this. At other times, they

ignore it. This interrupts the learning of the class. Pupils are not achieving the standards of which they are capable across the curriculum.

Children in early years get a better deal. The early years setting is vibrant. There are interesting activities to support children's learning both indoors and outside. Children enjoy learning. They particularly enjoy story time, becoming engrossed in a book and joining in with rhymes and actions. The early years curriculum, however, is not yet well developed. Leaders have not considered the small steps of learning that children need to make in all areas.

The school's provision to support pupils' personal development is weak. Pupils are not taught the full relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum. This has left pupils with misconceptions and significant gaps in their knowledge. Pupils feel confused and worried by what they have learned because it has not been taught well enough.

The local authority and the diocese have raised concerns with leaders about the school's provision. Governors were previously unaware of the school's failings. They had not challenged school leaders rigorously enough.

Two interim headteachers are working closely with school staff to address the weaknesses. There are early signs of improvement. However, there is an enormous amount of work to do to ensure the school's curriculum is fit for purpose.

Staff have had little training or professional development in recent years. They have had little guidance and feedback to help them improve their teaching. Because of this, the activities teachers plan, and the resources used in lessons, do not support pupils' learning well enough. Staff are committed to making the changes and improvements needed so that children and pupils experience the very best education. However, the enormity of the task ahead has increased staff workload and is causing them to feel overwhelmed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The school's safeguarding culture is weak. Interim leaders have worked hard to rectify this. They have strengthened safeguarding procedures. They take concerns about pupils' safety and welfare seriously, responding quickly and taking appropriate action to keep pupils safe. Interim leaders have retrained most staff so they better understand their safeguarding responsibilities. There are too many staff who do not remember important messages from training. This means that some staff are not alert to the signs that a child might not be safe. If staff do have concerns, some do not know what they should do or to whom they should report them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The safeguarding culture is weak, which puts pupils at risk of harm. Leaders need to ensure that all staff have refresher training in safeguarding as a matter of urgency so that they are alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm. They need to make sure that all staff know exactly how to report their concerns and to whom. Furthermore, all staff must be reminded of their responsibilities regularly so as to keep the safeguarding of pupils in the forefront of their minds.
- Pupils are not fluent readers. The teaching of phonics is not yet consistently strong and the teaching of reading in key stage 2 is weak. Leaders need to make the teaching of reading throughout the school a priority. They need to be clear about the school's approach, train staff and assure themselves that the reading curriculum is consistently delivered well.
- The school's curriculum is not ambitious enough. Pupils are not learning age-appropriate knowledge and skills. Leaders need to plan, and train staff to deliver, an ambitious, well-sequenced curriculum from early years onwards in each subject so that pupils' knowledge and skills build cumulatively. They need to ensure that pupils with SEND are given the support they need to access the curriculum and to succeed.
- The school's personal development programme is weak. Pupils have significant gaps in their understanding of the RSE curriculum. Leaders need to plan a comprehensive personal development programme, including a well-sequenced RSE curriculum, so that it meets the needs of all pupils, ensuring that they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when online, and that they are ready for life in modern Britain.

Leaders and those responsible for governance may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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	110442
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10211193
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jonathan Lewin (Interim Chair of Governors)
Headteacher	Barry Grace
Website	www.westcott.bucks.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Westcott Church of England School is located in the Diocese of Oxford. Its last section 48 inspection of its religious character took place in June 2015.
- The substantive headteacher has been absent from school since December 2021. The local authority and the diocese have appointed two interim headteachers to support the school during this time.
- The school admits three-year-old children into the nursery provision.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- An external provider offers after-school childcare on the school premises.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the interim headteachers. They also spoke to staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body and spoke to representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of Oxford.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- To inspect the school's safeguarding arrangements, inspectors met with leaders responsible for safeguarding and looked at relevant documentation, staff recruitment checks and training records. The inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views on the school. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during playtime, lunchtime and in lessons.
- The views of staff and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Leah Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Vicky Matthews

Ofsted Inspector

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