

Inspection of a good school: William Austin Junior School

Austin Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 1UA

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 November 2022

Outcome

William Austin Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at William Austin Junior show the greatest respect to their friends and teachers. They are happy and safe. Pupils delight in coming to school and enjoy all aspects of 'WA life'. They talk positively about cultural similarities and differences, including valuing different family lifestyles.

Pupils speak confidently about the interesting curriculum they study. They show a love of reading and remember many of the authors they have learned about. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

Relationships between pupils are polite and courteous. Bullying rarely happens. If it does, adults are quick to intervene. Pupils like the many reward systems in school, such as house and ladder points. They are encouraged to embrace the healthy competition among classes and houses.

There are a range of responsibilities that pupils can hold. These include head boy, head girl and members of the 'Junior Leadership Team'. Pupils take pride in being great role models. They know that they make a difference in school and to the local community by making decisions that affect others, such as raising money for charities. Pupils take part in many sports and musical experiences. These contribute towards them being ready for high school.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that builds on pupils' knowledge over time. In the majority of curriculum subjects, leaders identify the key knowledge pupils need to learn. Plans support pupils to review and build on their earlier learning with new knowledge. Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can do and remember. This is evident in the high-quality work pupils produce and their ability to talk knowledgeably about their learning.

Leaders ensure that training and support help staff to deliver the curriculum confidently and effectively. Overall, leaders' plans are sufficiently specific so that staff know exactly what to teach and when. In a few subjects, plans are less clear and do not identify clearly what pupils must know to learn more. This leads to differences in what pupils are taught. Consequently, pupils do not always retain the knowledge leaders intend in these areas compared to the rest of the curriculum.

Teachers check pupils' understanding in lessons using a range of effective strategies. As a result, pupils easily remember what they have been taught. For example, in music, pupils confidently tap out new rhythms using what they remember.

The reading curriculum is well designed. Reading is central to most lessons. Pupils can recall the range of books their teachers have read to them. They enjoy the challenge of taking quizzes and getting better at reading. A well-delivered fluency programme is ensuring that pupils learn to read with expression and intonation.

Staff quickly identify the small group of pupils who find reading hard. Staff provide regular support for these pupils with the aim of helping them improve. However, there is not a systematic teaching approach used. Consequently, these pupils are not catching up as quickly as they could. This makes it harder for them to learn some parts of the curriculum.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Consequently, effective support helps most pupils with SEND to learn the same curriculum as their peers. The work of pupils with SEND is of a high standard because of the appropriate targets and work they receive, except for the small group that find reading hard.

Pupils are engaged in their lessons and show pride in their work. Pupils are clear about the rewards and sanctions in school. They have high expectations of each other. Staff's consistent approach to supporting good behaviour means pupils behave well.

Leaders provide pupils with extra opportunities for pupils to enrich their understanding of the curriculum. These include history- and geography-based workshops and visits to places of worship. Leaders also plan trips to the seaside and other locations that family members can attend.

The governing body has been strengthened over the last two years by additional members. They have appropriately challenged leaders while also checking on staff well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive up-to-date training to be able to check for any pupils that may be at risk of harm. Records are detailed and used by leaders to identify any

support or action that is needed. Leaders are prompt and persistent with getting outside agencies involved to support families.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe and know to talk to trusted adults if they have any worries. In personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and in assemblies, pupils learn how to stay safe online and when out and about in the community.

Leaders ensure that recruitment checks on staff and visitors are carried out appropriately.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not clearly defined the expectation of exactly what knowledge pupils should learn and by when. This means that, occasionally, teachers' delivery of these subjects is inconsistent. This leads to some pupils not learning what leaders intend. Leaders must clarify the exact knowledge and vocabulary that all teachers must deliver. Leaders must then ensure that staff follow leaders' improved plans.
- The small group of pupils who are struggling to learn to read are not being taught using a systematic catch-up programme. Consequently, pupils are not improving their reading fast enough. This is affecting pupils' learning in other areas of the curriculum. Leaders must ensure that they develop a consistent approach to the teaching of reading for the pupils who are struggling to learn to read. Leaders must ensure that all staff are trained and understand how to use this approach, so it has the impact leaders expect.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2016.

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.

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	109560
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10193995
Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	545
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mohammad Kashif
Headteacher	Jo Adams
Website	www.william-austin.com
Date of previous inspection	18 and 19 May 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Three members of the governing body were co-opted by the local authority to strengthen the board in July 2020.
- Leaders do not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the two assistant headteachers and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and six other members of the governing board. They also met with the school improvement adviser from the local authority.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and music. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with leaders about history and PSHE.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day. The inspectors spoke to pupils in the playground and the lunch hall.
- To evaluate safeguarding, inspectors checked the school's single central record, considered the safeguarding policy and spoke to staff and pupils. The lead inspector looked at case files and discussed a range of safeguarding records with the designated safeguarding leaders.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents relating to behaviour, attendance and special educational needs. Minutes of governing body minutes were also scrutinised.
- The lead inspector considered the views of parents, including 65 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 30 free-text responses submitted during the inspection. The lead inspector also took account of the 27 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and the 99 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Isabel Davis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Joe Creswick

Ofsted Inspector

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