

Inspection of a good school: Willaston CofE Primary School

Neston Road, Willaston, Neston, Cheshire CH64 2TN

Inspection dates: 30 November and 1 December 2022

Outcome

Willaston CofE Primary School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years, are eager to attend school. They come through the school gates with smiles on their faces at the start of the school day. The excellent relationships that they share with adults and with each other help pupils feel happy and safe. Pupils said that staff are quick to deal with any worries or concerns that they have. Pupils are confident that if bullying should occur, it would be dealt with effectively by staff.

Leaders, staff and governors are highly committed to the school. They are extremely ambitious for pupils' learning and their behaviour. Pupils appreciate this and do their best to rise to the challenge. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils achieve exceptionally well across a range of subjects.

Leaders make sure that they celebrate good behaviour. For example, they enjoy Friday's special praise assemblies where pupils may be chosen as a 'star of the week'. Pupils receive this award for demonstrating one of the school's five values 'perseverance, respect, compassion, creation and service'.

Many pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities, for instance tennis, chess and a young engineering club. Leaders also ensure that pupils' horizons are broadened through a wide range of exciting trips and visits. This helps to bring pupils' learning to life.

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

Leaders have designed a highly effective curriculum. They have ensured that subject curriculums are ambitious and tailored to meet the needs of all pupils, including children in the early years and pupils with SEND. The school's values underpin leaders' high

aspirations for pupils to gain the knowledge that they need to succeed in the next stage of their education.

Subject leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They understand what pupils need to know to achieve well by the end of Year 6. They have made sure that the curriculum is organised so that teachers are clear about the knowledge and skills that pupils must learn and the order in which this content should be taught. Leaders prioritise developing children's and pupils' vocabulary. Pupils have a comprehensive understanding of relevant subject-specific language.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They encourage pupils to discuss and explain their learning with each other. Teachers successfully match activities to the knowledge in the curriculum. They make sure that learning builds on what pupils already know and can do. Teachers carefully revisit previous learning so that pupils develop an excellent grasp of curriculum content. This helps pupils, and children in the Reception class, to learn extremely well across the curriculum.

Reading is firmly placed at the heart of the curriculum. Children learn phonics successfully from the moment that they enter the Reception class. Staff are well trained to deliver the phonics programme skilfully. They match books to the sounds that children and pupils know. This helps children and pupils to practise their reading and grow in confidence. Staff provide effective support to pupils, including children in the early years and pupils with SEND, who need to catch up. Across the school, leaders and staff have created enticing and well-resourced libraries. For example, pupils and families enjoy selecting books from the windmill library outside.

Leaders identify children and pupils with SEND accurately and quickly. Additional support is put in place so that all pupils can access the curriculum. This enables pupils with SEND to achieve as well as their peers.

Pupils, including children in the early years, value their education. They behave exceptionally well in lessons, around the school and in the playgrounds. There is a genuine sense of togetherness, mutual respect and a strong desire to learn. Pupils and children learn without disruption.

Leaders and staff have created a rich curriculum that helps to support pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy learning about what makes a good citizen. They demonstrate high levels of respect for others and have a deep sense of responsibility. Pupils raise money for others less fortunate in their community and around the world.

Leaders have created many roles and responsibilities for pupils that they cherish. Pupils said how much they appreciate the way that staff genuinely listen to their ideas and involve them in the running of the school.

There is a strong culture of teamwork and mutual respect among the staff. They were overwhelmingly positive about the support and consideration that they receive from leaders.

Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the school. They have high expectations of leaders and robustly check on their work. Governors are committed to the success of every child at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Highly effective processes are in place to ensure that any potential concerns about a pupil are identified, recorded and reviewed. Staff and governors complete regular safeguarding training. Leaders work exceptionally well with external agencies. They make sure that vulnerable pupils and their families get the timely support that they need.

Pupils have a precise understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, especially when they are online. Leaders are aware of the increasing use of mobile devices. They provide regular guidance for parents on how they can keep their children safe when they are not at school.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2012.

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	111245
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10226224
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Richard Hinds
Headteacher	Julie Chambers
Website	www.willastonprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 April 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Chester. The last section 48 inspection took place in March 2017.
- A new chair of governors has been appointed to the school since the last inspection.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. She met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with staff and pupils.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders throughout the inspection.
- The inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.

- The inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with leaders.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with leaders, staff and pupils. The inspector checked a sample of leaders' safeguarding records and reviewed the recruitment checks made on staff.
- The inspector met with leaders to discuss SEND, behaviour and the provision for pupils' personal development.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She took account of responses from staff and pupils to Ofsted's online surveys and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with staff to discuss leaders' support for their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Julie Barlow, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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