

Inspection of a good school: West Town Primary Academy

Midland Road, Peterborough PE3 6DD

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 December 2022

Outcome

West Town Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils learn all about the habits of work, ethics and learning. They know these as their 'HOWELS' and say they enable you to 'get smart', 'try hard' and 'be kind'. Pupils treat each other with respect and are accepting of difference. Bullying is rare. Pupils say staff follow things up if they do ever have a worry or concern. This helps ensure pupils feel happy and safe.

Pupils experience an interesting curriculum, where trips and experiences help bring their learning alive. For example, in history, they visit a castle as part of learning about the Battle of Hastings. There are high expectations for everyone to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported to successfully access the same curriculum as their peers.

There is a 'warm but strict' approach to dealing with behaviour. Pupils follow very clear expectations. Staff take a restorative approach to sort out any issues that occur.

Pupils enjoy participating in a range of activities, from dance showcases to cricket competitions. These opportunities are equally open to all.

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

Leaders have ensured that an ambitious, well-designed curriculum that meets the needs of all is in place. They have done this by carefully planning the key knowledge they want pupils to learn over time. This begins in early years, where children build a secure foundation for future learning. For example, in mathematics, children get lots of early opportunities to learn about number and problem-solving. This provides the foundation they need to understand more complex mathematical concepts as they progress through the school.

Teachers are knowledgeable and deliver clear explanations. They support pupils to make links between subjects. For example, in design and technology, pupils make thrones using

wood and glue. While doing this, teachers support them to make links with their historical knowledge of monarchs, and the royal colours a monarch might choose. Teachers further combine this with links to real experiences and trips pupils have had. This helps pupils to deepen and connect their understanding, and to be able to successfully retain and recall key information.

Teachers assess what pupils know over time. They build 'consolidation time' into the curriculum, so they can revisit and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. This leads to pupils learning the intended curriculum effectively.

Leaders have ensured there is an appropriate focus on supporting all pupils to learn to read. This includes specialised reading groups in key stage 2, to enable those who are behind to catch up. From the time children start in early years, a love of reading is encouraged. Pupils get early opportunities to explore rhyme and songs. They access a variety of books, through class texts and the library, which are tracked and monitored effectively through reading records. Staff are knowledgeable about teaching phonics and have ensured that the books pupils read match the sounds pupils know. As a result, pupils use phonics as their basis for sounding out unfamiliar words. Despite this, a minority of pupils do not read as fluently as they should. This is because adults are not always trained well enough to provide the precise support needed to close fluency gaps.

The needs of pupils with SEND are identified accurately. Leaders have trained teachers in making appropriate adaptations for pupils with SEND so they can access the same curriculum. Where pupils' needs are more complex, specialist provision is given. The emotional needs of these pupils are well met, as warm and caring relationships exist. Even pupils who are not yet able to express their opinions verbally still have a voice.

Teachers challenge any low-level disruption so that it does not disrupt learning. Leaders carefully log any behaviour issues, so they can spot patterns and put appropriate follow-up in place.

Pupils learn about issues such as different types of families, mental and physical well-being and how to deal with strong emotions through a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). There is a range of opportunities for them to pursue their talents and interests, such as sports competitions, drama showcases and a plastic brick construction club.

The school is well led and managed. The trust provides effective additional capacity to both challenge and support school leaders. This includes practical support, such as trust subject specialists working with school leaders to refine and redevelop curriculum plans. Leaders consider staff's workload and well-being effectively. Teachers say leaders think through decisions with this in mind, and are reflective.

Safeguarding

The safeguarding arrangements are effective.

Staff work in a coordinated way to ensure that the needs of all pupils are effectively identified. This includes specialist support to identify feelings and changes in behaviour for non-verbal pupils and those with complex needs.

Staff and governors are well trained in safeguarding. Staff are clear about systems and about how to identify and report concerns. Leaders connect information about pupils and ensure they work effectively with external agencies to secure the support pupils need.

Safer recruitment processes are effective. An effective programme of PSHE and pastoral support raises pupils' awareness of safeguarding risks.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A minority of pupils have not had precise enough support to close gaps in their ability to decode and blend words. This is because some adults have not had the training they need to provide this support well enough. As a result, a minority of pupils do not read with the fluency they should. Leaders need to ensure that all staff are appropriately trained in providing precisely targeted support to close any gaps in pupils' ability to decode and blend words, so that they can read with age-appropriate fluency.

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 2017.

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	140855
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10255178
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	387
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Shirley Jamieson
Headteacher	Hannah Quinn
Website	www.westtownprimary.org
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- West Town Primary Academy converted to an academy in June 2014. The school is part of the Meridian Trust.
- The headteacher was appointed in 2017, following the previous inspection.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with curriculum leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector conducted meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the executive headteacher, the deputy chief executive officer and the chief executive officer of the trust. He also met with members of the local academy council and the local

authority, and leaders of provision for SEND, early years, PSHE, behaviour and attendance, personal development and safeguarding.

- The inspector observed breaktimes and lunchtimes. The inspector spoke to a wide range of pupils at these times.
- In addition to deep dive activities, the inspector visited lessons in design and technology.
- The inspector explored the school's safeguarding culture through viewing safeguarding records and procedures, meeting with a range of pupils and staff and talking to safeguarding leads.
- The inspector considered the 51 responses and 23 free-text responses made by parents to the Ofsted Parent View survey. There were no responses to the pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

James Chester, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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