

Inspection of Witton Church Walk CofE Aided Nursery and Primary School

Church Walk, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5QQ

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud members of this happy and nurturing school. They enjoy warm and caring relationships with staff. One pupil summed up the views of many by saying, 'There's always someone here for you; everyone is welcome; [and] everyone can be themselves.'

Leaders' records show that they act quickly to investigate and deal with any bullying issues effectively. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), said they feel confident that there are trusted adults who they can go to if they have any worries or problems. During breaktimes, pupils value having a buddy bus stop, where they can go and find a friend to play with. This helps them to feel safe and well looked after.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The vast majority of pupils follow the school's values. Leaders make sure that any pupils who struggle to manage their emotions receive effective support.

Leaders have high ambitions and expectations for pupils' learning. However, leaders and governors have not made sure that pupils, including those with SEND, learn well enough in some subjects.

Pupils proudly take on a variety of leadership roles. They take their responsibilities seriously. This helps them to become responsible and active citizens.

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

Leaders and staff have collaborated to design a connected and engaging curriculum from the Nursery class to the end of Year 6. The curriculum matches the ambition of the national curriculum. Staff have identified key content that pupils will learn in a logical order.

In some subjects, the way that some leaders have designed their subject curriculums means that pupils do not encounter certain aspects of the curriculum often enough to secure their learning. In a few subjects, leaders and staff have not had sufficient training to ensure that they have well-developed subject knowledge and skills.

For the most part, teachers introduce new learning to pupils well. They use assessment strategies effectively in order to identify and resolve misconceptions in lessons. However, staff do not use assessment information as rigorously to check what pupils have understood and remembered in the longer term. Consequently, not enough pupils develop detailed knowledge in some areas of the curriculum.

Staff encourage pupils to read widely and often. They celebrate events such as World Book Day to develop pupils' love of reading. Staff also read stories and share

songs and rhymes with the youngest children to capture their interest and enthusiasm for reading.

Leaders have recently strengthened the phonics curriculum and staff now consistently deliver the early reading programme well. Early readers begin to learn phonics as soon as they start school. They use the sounds that they have been taught to read unfamiliar books. Staff quickly help struggling readers. However, the strategies that a few staff use to support younger readers in one-to-one sessions are sometimes not implemented consistently well.

Leaders have made changes to the way they teach the reading curriculum across the rest of the school. However, it is too soon to see the impact of leaders' work. Although older pupils have positive attitudes to reading, too many pupils still do not learn to read as well as their peers nationally.

Leaders work hard to make sure that pupils with SEND are identified quickly. Staff engage well with external services to provide support for pupils with specific needs so they mostly learn alongside their classmates. Leaders have acted on parents' feedback to introduce parent forums. Parents and carers of pupils with SEND who shared their views with inspectors find these sessions helpful and supportive.

Pupils behave well. Their learning is rarely disturbed by others. Pupils show high levels of tolerance and respect. They try hard. Children in the early years enjoy positive relationships with staff and each other. However, a few pupils do not attend school on time or regularly enough.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of activities, visitors and visits to broaden their horizons. This starts in the early years, where children learn about festivals and celebrations. Older pupils learn about British values such as democracy. They also proudly represent their school in various events. Pupils particularly look forward to attending residential visits with their friends.

Governors, leaders and staff work well together. For example, they worked tirelessly to ensure that pupils could return to school following a serious flood which took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, governors have not held leaders to account well enough for the legacy of underachievement of pupils. They have not made sure that some pupils across the school learn as well as they should.

Governors and leaders take staff workload and well-being into account. Staff feel that leaders support them well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained so that they are highly alert to any issues regarding pupils' safety. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns and take prompt action.

They work well with a range of agencies to provide pupils and their families with valuable support.

Pupils learn about different aspects of safety. This includes not giving out passwords or personal details when using the internet, the importance of physical exercise and looking after their emotional well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Governors and leaders have not made sure that pupils achieve as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics. Governors and leaders should ensure that the legacy of poor achievement is quickly addressed so that pupils achieve at least as well as their peers nationally.
- Some subject leaders have not designed their curriculums so that pupils encounter important content often enough. They also do not check how well pupils have remembered knowledge over time. As a result, some pupils struggle to develop detailed knowledge in some areas of the curriculum. Leaders should make sure that pupils are supported to know more and remember more in a range of subjects in the longer term.
- A few staff and subject leaders lack some subject-specific knowledge. This means that they do not always design some aspects of their curriculums as well as they could. A few staff who work with early readers do not always use effective strategies when listening to pupils read. Leaders should ensure that staff receive appropriate training to develop their skills and confidence.
- A small number of pupils do not come to school often enough or on time. This means that they miss important learning. Governors and leaders should make sure that these pupils and their families continue to be further supported so they attend school regularly.

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	111389
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10241847
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	282
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ruth Cannon
Headteacher	Kathryn Magiera
Website	www.wittonchurchwalk.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not currently make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- Leaders provide a breakfast club and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff in school. They spoke with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. Inspectors spoke with representatives of the local authority and diocese. They also spoke with the school's school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science and history. They spoke with the curriculum leaders of these subject areas. Inspectors

also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.

- Inspectors also spoke with leaders from other areas of the curriculum. They looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils.
- An inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed children's and pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and at lunchtimes. They observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors evaluated leaders' safeguarding arrangements and scrutinised leaders' self-evaluation documents and improvement plans.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

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