

Inspection of a good school: West Coker CofE VC Primary School

High Street, West Coker, Yeovil, Somerset BA22 9AS

Inspection date: 14 March 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at West Coker are kind and considerate. Staff care deeply about their well-being. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and well looked after. Pupils understand the difference between bullying and falling out. They are confident that their teachers will quickly sort out any disagreements.

While the school has many strengths, pupils are not learning as well as they could. In some subjects, leaders are still developing the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Consequently, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

Leaders set high expectations for behaviour. The atmosphere in school is calm and productive. Pupils behave well in lessons. They enjoy the wide variety of subjects on offer.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about the range of opportunities they have, both inside and outside of lessons. They are keen to participate in the various after-school clubs, and will readily put forward their own suggestions for possible activities. For example, leaders established a crochet and knitting club at the pupils' request.

Parents are positive about the school. They appreciate the work that the school undertakes to ensure that pupils grow in confidence and self-belief.

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

The wider curriculum is less well developed than it is in English and mathematics. In some subjects, leaders have not broken down the essential knowledge into precise steps of learning for pupils in mixed-age classes. The knowledge that teachers want pupils to know and remember is not always clear and sufficiently ordered towards planned

end-points. As a result, some pupils do not remember what they have learned well enough and have gaps in what they should know. For example, in physical education, some pupils find it hard to recall the skills they have previously covered.

Leaders promote a love of reading. Teachers ensure that pupils get off to a strong start learning their letters and sounds. Leaders use rewards to encourage pupils to read widely and often. They help parents to support their children at home with reading. Regular checks ensure that any pupil who falls behind has effective support to help them catch up. However, some pupils at an early stage of learning to read are not given books that match the sounds they know. This limits their ability to read fluently.

The mathematics curriculum is well thought out. Teachers ensure that learning meets the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. Leaders have recently strengthened the mathematics curriculum by providing a coherent approach to the way mathematics is taught. As a result, pupils demonstrate a good recall of the facts, methods and strategies they have previously learned.

Teachers have the same ambitious end-points in learning for pupils with SEND. However, some pupils' individual targets are not specific enough. Teachers do not always identify the exact steps pupils with SEND need to make in order to succeed. This means that some pupils struggle to develop their understanding and do not make the progress they are capable of.

Leaders provide pupils with many opportunities to support their personal development. In personal, social and health education, pupils gain useful knowledge in preparation for life in modern Britain. This helps them to stay safe online and maintain a healthy lifestyle. The school's recent focus on developing pupils' resilience is paying off. Pupils concentrate well on their learning. Lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour.

Governors know the school well. They have a clear vision and use regular visits to support and challenge leaders. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel well supported by leaders. Staff in the early stages of their career receive the guidance they need to develop their skills and expertise accordingly.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that curriculum development, provision and target setting for pupils with SEND and ensuring that reading books match the sounds that pupils know may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that keeping pupils safe is a top priority. They provide staff with up-to-date training that enables them to swiftly identify the potential signs of abuse. Staff understand the school's procedures for recording and reporting their concerns. Leaders work closely with families and external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the right support as early as possible. Staff know pupils and their families well. They are quick to

notice any changes in pupils' behaviour. Leaders' checks on adults who join the school are undertaken with appropriate rigour.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's wider curriculum is not sufficiently well developed and sequenced to meet the needs of mixed-age classes. As a result, pupils do not develop the same level of knowledge and understanding across the curriculum as they should. Leaders need to ensure that the important knowledge they want pupils to know is clearly identified and sequenced, so pupils know more and remember more over time.
- Individual targets do not identify exactly what pupils with SEND need to do to further progress with their learning. This prevents pupils from building their knowledge securely over time. Leaders must ensure that pupils with SEND have targets that are matched more precisely to their needs.
- A minority of pupils who find learning to read difficult do not always have books that match the sounds that they have learned. This hampers their ability to read fluently and with confidence. Leaders need to ensure that pupils who are learning to read have books that match the sounds that they know.

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 2013.

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	123821
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10211167
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	29
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jo Williams
Headteacher	Philip Hyland
Website	www.westcoker.somerset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- West Coker CofE VC Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are organised into two mixed-age classes.
- The school runs before- and after-school provision.
- The headteacher took up his post in June 2021.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There are fewer than five children in the early years foundation stage.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the SEND coordinator, curriculum leaders, teaching staff and governors, including the chair of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and the school's improvement partner.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. 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. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read to an adult.
- The lead inspector looked at the single central record and checked the school's systems for monitoring and reporting safeguarding concerns. He also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The lead inspector reviewed key documentation, including school action plans, governors' minutes and safeguarding records.
- The lead inspector considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments, and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Neil Swait, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kate Masters

Ofsted Inspector

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