

Inspection of a good school: Willesborough Junior School

Highfield Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent TN24 0JU

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

Willesborough Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils come into school happily and feel safe here. There is a buzz of learning in all classes. Pupils of all ages collaborate well and share their learning. They are curious and interested in their learning, asking questions of their teachers.

Leaders are aspirational for every pupil to be the best that they can be. As a result, pupils are interested in their learning and usually achieve well. The core values of leadership, aspiration, determination, responsibility and respect shine through the school and the curriculum. These values influence how pupils and adults treat one another.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of responsibilities leaders give them. These include being 'Junior midday supervisors', librarians, sports leaders and 'office apprentices'. These opportunities enable pupils to develop their leadership skills. Pupils help younger pupils and act as positive role models for them. They appreciate that their responsibilities enable them to contribute to the school community and to make a difference. Pupils enjoy contributing to their wider community, too, such as visiting a local care home to sing to residents.

Bullying is rare and is not tolerated by leaders. Pupils behave well in lessons because their learning engages them. The extensive pastoral team supports pupils and their families well. Pupils are proud of their school.

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

Leaders have supported staff to raise ambitions about what pupils can achieve since the previous inspection. Strong relationships are at the heart of leaders' and governors' improvement work. Leaders plan carefully for staff development at all levels, and staff appreciate the time that leaders give them to work with colleagues to strengthen the curriculum.

In many subjects, subject leaders have refined their well-sequenced curriculums. They have defined clear goals for each unit of work and developed teachers' subject knowledge. Leaders identify precisely the knowledge and skills they intend pupils to learn. This helps teachers to check pupils' understanding accurately, which supports pupils to know more and remember more. This means that pupils can talk about ideas that are threaded through the curriculum. For example, in history, they understand how concepts like society, rule and trade link together. While this is more developed in some subjects than others, leaders are now developing this across the whole curriculum.

Leaders prioritise reading for all pupils. Staff have a sharp focus on pupils who are still at an early stage of learning to read, including those who have fallen behind. They provide daily lessons for pupils to help them to become confident and fluent readers. Leaders have ensured that all teaching staff have had the right training to teach phonics. They use the same programme as the linked infant school, which means that pupils swiftly continue with their learning from the start of Year 3. Pupils read books that closely match the sounds they have learned, which supports them to develop fluency and confidence. Teachers choose high-quality stories to read aloud to their classes. Pupils appreciate their well-stocked and organised library. Consequently, pupils develop positive attitudes to reading.

Classrooms are purposeful environments where pupils learn free from disruption. Pupils are respectful, but also friendly and curious. Adults support pupils with complex needs effectively to manage their behaviour and to help them to work as independently as possible. Leaders make sure that staff adapt their teaching for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This means that they are successfully supported to learn the same curriculum as their peers.

Leaders' work to promote pupils' wider development is a significant strength of the school. They provide a range of clubs and opportunities to engage all pupils. Leaders prioritise access for disadvantaged pupils and those whose attendance is a concern. This has been successful in improving some pupils' attendance. Well-considered lunchtime clubs also provide nurturing opportunities for pupils who find playtimes a challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have built a strong safeguarding culture by providing high-quality training for all staff. This means that all staff are confident to identify pupils at risk of potential harm and report concerns promptly. Leaders act on any concerns swiftly. They are tenacious in securing support from external agencies to get families and pupils the help that they may need. Leaders prioritise strong pastoral support for pupils and families.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through the school's bespoke citizenship curriculum. They understand how to stay safe online by not sharing their personal details.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in some subjects needs further development. This means that pupils do not learn as well as they could. Leaders should make sure that subject leaders refine the sequences of learning and identify precisely the key skills and knowledge that they intend pupils to learn and remember.

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 May 2014.

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	118371
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10256514
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	511
Appropriate authority	Governing body
Co-Chairs of governing body	Liesl York and Steve Rippin
Executive Headteacher	Fran Rusbridge
Website	www.willesborough-js.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school federated with Willesborough Infant School in 2019.
- The governing body manages before- and after-school clubs.
- The school makes use of two unregistered alternative providers.

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 school leaders and have taken that into account in her evaluation.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector met regularly with the executive headteacher and assistant headteachers. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority and met remotely with several members of the governing body, including the two co-chairs of the governing body.
- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, she met with subject leader teams to discuss the

curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work. She also listened to some pupils read.

- The lead inspector reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records and through discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.
- The views of pupils, parents, carers and staff were gathered through discussions and responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Joyce Lydford, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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