

# Inspection of Wessex Primary School

St Adrian's Close, Cox Green, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 3AT

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Inspection dates: 19 and 20 April 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy their time at Wessex and talk about making long-lasting friends. The outdoor grounds provide space for pupils to happily play together. Pupils enjoy the many different activities which promote fitness and social skills. This exemplifies the school's positive culture of polite pupils and adults who care for them.

The many leadership opportunities motivate pupils. These include well-being ambassadors, 'mini police' and eco-leaders. On top of this are many clubs to whet pupils' appetite for learning new skills such as judo, gardening and dance. Pupils enjoy school trips where they visit different places.

Beyond pupils' personal development, improvements are needed to raise academic and behaviour expectations. The work that pupils complete is not ambitious enough in some subjects. In early years, children are not getting off to the best possible start in their learning. Many pupils are leaving Year 6 not fully literate and numerate. This is not helped because there are still too many pupils who are not attending regularly.

Generally, most pupils behave well and they are respectful. But sometimes in lessons, adults do not always ensure that every child is following the rules and routines in place. This leads to pupils missing out on learning essential knowledge.

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

In only a matter of days, the newly appointed headteacher has a firm handle on where the school needs to improve. He has high expectations and is working positively with leaders to bring about rapid change. At the last inspection, weaknesses were highlighted in the school's overall performance. Since then, the pace of change has been slow. Wessex has been through an unsettled period with challenges amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in leadership and governance. Positively, new plans are steering everyone in the right direction, but there is much to do.

Governors have been focusing on financial priorities and leadership and governor recruitment. This has meant they have not always had the capacity to provide the required challenge around why the school's improvement priorities were not quickly implemented and pupils' previous low attainment. Governors acknowledge that greater challenge is needed in holding leaders to account for the quality of education.

The curriculum is currently not ambitious enough in some areas and requires further improvement. Some subjects do not set out the important knowledge that pupils need to learn through all year groups. In early years, curriculum planning and the resources in the indoor and outdoor environment are not helping children to know more and do more. These curriculum shortfalls make it harder for teachers to know what they should be teaching and to ensure they are setting appropriate activities.

Encouragingly, there are strengths in the curriculum for early reading and mathematics. At the last inspection, the teaching of phonics needed improving. Leaders have introduced a new programme which is highly ambitious and clearly sequenced. However, this took longer to implement than hoped. Leaders have wisely utilised experts from the programme's training provider. This additional support is making a big difference in staff's confidence and expertise to teach pupils to read. Leaders are assessing pupils' gaps more precisely and providing pupils with daily 'fast track' tutoring to catch up. Nevertheless, many pupils are not learning to read quickly enough.

Greater consistency is emerging in how teachers check what pupils remember. In mathematics, pupils have daily recall of facts and previously taught content to secure understanding and fluency. Teachers are getting better at picking up pupils' misconceptions and reteaching concepts when needed.

The new leadership of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. Some impressive changes have been made such as swifter identification and clarity about what needs to be in place for pupils' learning. In the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision), skilled adults work with deaf children. They think carefully about the learning environment and how to present content in a way for these pupils to access the same planned ambition.

Leaders have established robust systems to tackle persistent absence and secure higher attendance. But these approaches have not yet had the desired impact. There is also an unevenness around staff's use of the school's behaviour expectations. Sometimes in lessons, learning is interrupted and not all pupils are behaving consistently well.

Pupils are accepting of others and celebrate those from different religions and backgrounds. They know how to treat everyone equally. Pupils show a good understanding of fundamental British values. Leaders adapt the personal development curriculum appropriately to help pupils learn more about their local community.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

A strong safeguarding culture exists at Wessex. Leaders have recently introduced an online recording system. This is working well because leaders clearly document any concerns and actions. The safeguarding team communicates regularly to check on pupils' welfare. When working with other agencies, leaders act with courage and persistence to safeguard children and their families.

Staff benefit from a comprehensive training programme. Leaders share with staff any updates so that everyone remains clued up. Pupils know how to keep safe in

person and online. Older pupils know about online messaging and how to tell an adult if they become worried.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum across different subjects does not clearly identify cumulatively sufficient knowledge that builds through the year groups. Therefore, pupils are not remembering content securely over time. Leaders need to urgently address the weaknesses that remain in curriculum design which will then better support teachers' curriculum implementation.
- The early years environment is not sufficiently enabling the school's curriculum intent to be successfully delivered. This impacts children's knowledge and skills development. Leaders need to ensure that the planned curriculum and resources provided for children equip them well for the key stage 1 national curriculum.
- The school's behaviour expectations and routines are not consistently embedded across all classes. This can lead to off-task behaviour in lessons which impacts pupils' learning of the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that in all year groups, teachers implement the school's agreed systems and routines.
- Governors are not rigorous enough in holding leaders to account for the quality of education. This means that they do not have a firm grasp of the impact of leaders' actions on improving pupil outcomes. Governors need to access further training to enable them to ask more probing questions to assure themselves that pupils are receiving a good standard of education.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109821
<b>Local authority</b>	Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256288
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	401
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Naomi Churchill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tim Beavan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wessexprimary.org">www.wessexprimary.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 and 26 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in April 2023, having only been in post for two days before the on-site inspection. Before this, the two deputy headteachers acted as interim co-headteachers for two terms. This is the second change in senior leadership of the school since the last inspection. A new chair of governors started in March 2023.
- Wessex has a specially resourced provision which caters for deaf pupils with moderate to profound loss. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. There are six pupils across the age ranges accessing this base.
- Since the last inspection, the school no longer caters for Nursery-age children.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

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

- 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 met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair. He also spoke with a school improvement adviser from the local authority and a local headteacher supporting the school.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, geography and physical education. To do this, they met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors talked to pupils from different year groups about their learning and experiences at school. This included hearing pupils read.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads to examine records and actions. This included sampling a range of safeguarding documentation. A team inspector reviewed checks on the safer recruitment of adults. Inspectors considered a qualifying safeguarding concern from 2020 as part of the evidence base.
- The views of staff, pupils and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school. This included leaders' self-evaluation and school development priorities, policies, curriculum documents, published information about pupils' performance, pupil premium strategy and minutes of governors' meetings.

### **Inspection team**

James Broadbridge, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sam French	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Wilkins	Ofsted Inspector

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