

Inspection of a good school: Watcombe Primary School

Moor Lane, Torquay, Devon TQ2 8NU

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 April 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?

Leaders, including governors, have guided the school through a period of staffing changes. They have prioritised the development of the curriculum to ensure that high expectations are in place for all pupils. Leaders' actions are beginning to make a difference to the education that pupils receive. However, the curriculum design is in the early stages in some subjects. The curriculum does not yet support all pupils to build knowledge as well as they could.

Pupils are polite and respectful. They enjoy attending school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are included in all aspects of school life. Staff know the needs of pupils well and provide a nurturing and safe place for pupils to learn. Pupils are proud to be a part of the school community. One pupil said: 'Watcombe is such a team and we all work together to do well.'

Most pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and around the school. Pupils embrace the school values of 'respect, responsibility, aspiration and confidence'. They know how these values help them to be successful. Pupils have a clear understanding of bullying. Most pupils feel any worries or concerns are dealt with promptly.

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

Leaders are determined for pupils to succeed. Leaders have started to develop a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. They have strengthened the role of subject leaders. Monitoring is now in place that informs leaders how well pupils learn the curriculum. However, some subject developments are in their infancy. The essential knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn and revisit to ensure that pupils know more and remember more is not yet clear.

Teachers use a variety of strategies to help pupils learn. These include opportunities for pupils to practise new learning that builds on prior learning. This helps pupils to embed their new knowledge. However, teachers do not always use assessment with enough precision to check that pupils have remembered what has been taught. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge. This makes it difficult for them to deepen their understanding and learn as well as they could.

Children get off to a strong start in early years. Language development is a priority. Staff design learning opportunities that capture children's interests. Children grow in confidence. Leaders support children to secure their knowledge through opportunities to revisit prior learning. This ensures that children are well prepared for their next stage.

Leaders' focus on well-being supports all pupils to begin their school day positively. Teachers adapt learning to support pupils with SEND. However, adaptations are not always considered well enough for pupils to make the progress that is required. Some learning targets lack precision or do not focus on the most significant gaps in knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not build knowledge quickly and securely.

Reading is a priority. Children develop a love of reading as soon as they start in Nursery. Leaders consider carefully the books teachers read to pupils. Pupils enjoy reading and sharing their favourite books with each other. This includes when older pupils visit the younger classes for shared reading. Staff have a secure understanding of the phonics programme. Pupils learn to read successfully. Staff match pupils' reading books to the sounds they know. This helps pupils to practise their reading and develop their fluency.

Leaders set routines for pupils to follow that make the school calm and orderly. Leaders and staff know pupils' individual needs and respond to them well. Occasionally, expectations of pupils' behaviour are not high enough. As a result, some learning is slowed. A small number of pupils feel that friendship issues are not resolved.

Pupils are supported to develop beyond the academic curriculum. Leaders promote character development and a sense of responsibility. Pupils value the many opportunities they have to take part in leadership roles across the school. This includes the 'pupil leadership team', which meets weekly. Members discuss key issues such as gender discrimination and share this with their peers when back in class. This supports pupils to develop their understanding of equality and diversity.

Staff value leaders' consideration for their workload. Governors know the school well, including the areas that need to improve. They ask the right questions to hold leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know pupils and their families well. All staff receive regular training that helps to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Records are monitored with rigour. As a result, leaders and governors are clear on patterns and trends. This helps the school

provide further support to families where needed. Pupils know that adults will listen to them if they have any worries. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

Leaders make the necessary recruitment checks on adults who work in the school. Minor issues were identified with the recording of these checks, which have now been rectified.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not identified the essential knowledge they want pupils to know and build over time in some subjects. As a result, pupils develop gaps in their knowledge and find it hard to remember their learning. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum continues to be developed to provide the clarity and precision of what pupils need to know and remember across the curriculum.
- Teachers do not use assessment well enough to check pupils' understanding. Subsequent learning does not build on what pupils know and can do. This creates gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers need to ensure that assessment is effective in identifying what pupils know and can do. This will enable teachers to adapt subsequent learning to help pupils to deepen their understanding.
- Staff identify the needs of pupils with SEND well. However, some learning targets lack precision to support pupils to build their knowledge securely. Adaptations to learning are not always meeting pupils' needs well enough. Leaders must ensure that learning targets focus on the most significant gaps in knowledge. They must also check that all pupils receive the support they need to learn well.

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 November 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

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| Unique reference number | 113233 |
| Local authority | Torbay |
| Inspection number | 10268608 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 225 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Fiona Prior |
| Headteacher | Tim Nield |
| Website | www.watcombe-primary.torbay.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | November 2017 |

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change in headteacher. The headteacher joined the school in September 2022.
- This school is an average-sized primary school.

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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke with school leaders, subject leaders, parents, carers, pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to a trusted adult.

- To evaluate safeguarding, the inspector spoke to the designated safeguarding leader, staff, governors and pupils, and evaluated record-keeping and staff training.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, the inspector spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, and comments made by parents online during the inspection. She also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Esther Best, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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