

Inspection of a good school: Wickham Market Primary School

Dallinghoo Road, Wickham Market, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 0RP

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 May 2023

Outcome

Wickham Market Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Wickham Market Primary School are kind and caring to one another. Adults ask much of them, and they step up to meet these expectations. In lessons, pupils are keen and attentive. They willingly share ideas and suggestions when invited by adults. They know that making a mistake is fine and that it helps to build their resilience.

Bullying is rare. When issues do happen between friends, adults are quick to help mend relationships. Pupils know they can share problems with adults. There is a culture of mutual respect, which means pupils know it is ok to be different. They feel safe in school and can be themselves.

Older pupils love the responsibilities adults give them, such as being a library monitor or school councillor. Pupils carry out these roles with great diligence, developing their independence as they go about their work.

Pupils take every opportunity to benefit from the vast school grounds. Time spent in the forest area feeds their curiosity and helps them take well-calculated risks. Visits further afield, such as to a university, to theatres and into London, broaden their horizons beyond Wickham Market. Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 as well-rounded young people.

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

Leaders have established a curriculum that enables pupils to learn well. In many subjects, pupils learn and remember a wide body of knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support. This is because adults know the specific needs of these pupils very well. Adults then carefully adapt the activities pupils with SEND complete, so that they learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

The youngest pupils learn to read accurately and confidently. Adults are skilled in teaching the school's chosen phonics programme. As pupils learn more sounds, they read books that help them practise these new sounds. The few pupils who need more help with reading are well supported and catch up quickly. Pupils enjoy hearing adults read stories to them. Older pupils use these stories to inspire them to read a wider range of books from the school's attractive and well-stocked library.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and explain new ideas to pupils clearly. They check that pupils remember new learning before they move on. This helps pupils build detailed knowledge in most subjects so they can carry out more complex tasks. In a few subjects, pupils do not develop such deep knowledge. This is because leaders have not precisely identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember in these subjects.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are well taught and cared for. They are supported by adults who know them and their individual needs well. Every opportunity is taken to talk with children, including asking them questions about what they are learning. The youngest children are expertly guided to form letters and numbers correctly, following a well-established programme. Many older pupils, some of whom missed out on building solid foundations for handwriting due to the disruption of the pandemic, do not always form letters correctly when writing.

The class 'worry jars' and 'positive pots' provide the chance for pupils to share their concerns and celebrate their successes. The regular 'safe space' sessions allow pupils the opportunity to talk about their concerns or issues important to them. Teachers respond sensitively to any worries pupils have.

Outside of lessons, pupils take part in a wide range of clubs, such as cooking, gymnastics and craft club. Members of the choir perform at Snape Maltings, while other pupils delight in representing the school in local and county sporting competitions, such as orienteering and cross-country. Pupils know the importance of keeping healthy, in both their physical and mental health. These many and varied wider opportunities support pupils' personal development well.

Lessons are rarely disrupted. Pupils work hard in class and want to do well. Where pupils, often with SEND, need extra support to manage their behaviour and emotions, adults are on hand to provide skilled and sensitive guidance.

Adults are proud to work in school. Senior leaders take care to manage staff's workload and support them to teach well. Teachers receive regular training to keep their skills sharp. This is especially the case for teachers new to the profession.

Members of the trust board and local advisory board work harmoniously to provide a balance of challenge and support for leaders. They work strategically, keeping a close eye on how well aspects of the school are performing. Board members visit regularly to see for themselves what leaders tell them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a well-established safeguarding culture in school. Adults know the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They are well trained, and report concerns without delay. Leaders do all they can, including working well with external agencies, to help pupils and their families where needed.

All pre-employment checks on adults are carried out as they should be. Members of the local advisory board check regularly to make sure leaders do all they can to keep pupils safe. Pupils know how to stay safe. They know the risks they face and know how they can keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not set out clearly the specific knowledge they want pupils to learn. Consequently, in these subjects, teachers do not routinely refer to what pupils should have learned to help strengthen pupils' understanding. In these few subjects, pupils do not learn the depth of knowledge they do in other areas. Leaders should identify the exact knowledge they want pupils to learn, training teachers to understand how best to teach this and to check pupils' understanding over time.
- The curriculum to teach older pupils to form letters correctly is not sufficiently developed and adapted to address the learning missed during the pandemic. This means many pupils in key stage 2 do not form their letters correctly and consistently. Some of their writing is difficult to read. Leaders should ensure they put in place an effective programme to enable pupils to improve and develop their handwriting over time.

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 predecessor school, Wickham Market Community Primary School, to be good in February 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	141551
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10255066
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jeremy Mead
Headteacher	Helen Murray
Website	www.wickhammarketprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school is part of the Avocet Academy Trust. In September 2023, the headteacher will take up the role of executive headteacher within the trust. The assistant headteacher has been appointed to take on the role of headteacher in the school.
- The local advisory board is the name for the body that carries out the functions of local governance of the 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator and other subject leaders. The inspector met with members of the local advisory board and held a meeting with the chief executive officer of the trust. The inspector reviewed a range of documents provided by leaders, including information about the work of trustees and the local advisory board.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised the single central record of staff personnel checks and reviewed safeguarding documents and systems. The inspector spoke with leaders, teachers, support staff, members of the governing body and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- The inspector considered 43 responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online survey for parents, 20 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 38 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Nathan Lowe, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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