

Inspection of Weston Primary School

Lamsickle Lane, Weston Village, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 4RA

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 June 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Weston Primary. They told inspectors that they feel safe in school. Pupils look forward to seeing their friends and their teachers each day.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of all pupils. This includes children in the early years and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils want to achieve all that they can. Overall, they achieve well.

Pupils typically behave in line with staff's high expectations. They are eager to earn recognition for their efforts during celebration assemblies. Staff also acknowledge pupils' successes by sending notes of commendation home to parents and carers.

Pupils were able to speak about the school's values and why these are important to follow. For example, they understand the need to respect other people for their differences. Pupils talked positively about equality and diversity. On the rare occasion that bullying or unkindness occurs, leaders and staff resolve it quickly.

Pupils benefit from a variety of extra-curricular activities and trips. For example, they have access to sports, science, music and cookery clubs. Pupils excitedly recalled recent trips to museums and places of worship. The school recently took part in a local art exhibition which showcased pupils' artwork and creativity.

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

Leaders have placed a high priority on addressing the weaknesses that were identified at the previous inspection. For example, leaders have taken effective action to improve the design of the curriculum in most subjects. During this time, there have also been some considerable changes to the school's leadership and staffing arrangements. Nevertheless, leaders have ensured that most pupils have continued to learn well during this period of instability.

Leaders have designed a broad and knowledge-rich curriculum. Overall, teachers know the most important content that pupils should learn and when this should be taught. The curriculum is particularly well designed in key stages 1 and 2. However, in one or two areas of learning in the early years, leaders have not finalised exactly what children must learn. From time to time, this hinders how well some children obtain new knowledge. Very occasionally, this means that a few children are not as ready as they could be for the demands of key stage 1.

Typically, staff implement the curriculum well. They select appropriate activities to deliver new information to pupils. Staff also access suitable training which helps them to develop their subject knowledge. Within lessons, teachers are astute to how well pupils are learning and they help to address any misunderstandings that pupils develop. Teachers make regular checks that pupils are learning the intended curriculum.

Leaders identify pupils with SEND swiftly. Staff work closely with outside agencies, and with parents and carers. Leaders and staff successfully enable pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum and the wider aspects of school life, for example enrichment activities and extra-curricular clubs.

Reading has a high profile throughout the school. Staff provide newsletters to encourage pupils and their families to read more widely. Well-designed whole-school reading events successfully bring stories to life. Pupils visit the library regularly to choose from a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. Older pupils were eager to talk to inspectors about their favourite authors and genres. By the end of Year 6, most pupils can read fluently.

Children start to learn letters and the sounds that they represent from the beginning of the Reception class. The books that pupils read match the sounds that they already know. Leaders have provided staff with relevant training so that they know how to teach phonics. Leaders are continuing to ensure that staff deliver the phonics programme with fidelity, such as by demonstrating the correct letter sounds.

Pupils conduct themselves well. They are polite and well mannered. Pupils understand the importance of listening to other people. In the early years, children have a strong sense of belonging and they learn the school routines quickly. Overall, pupils engage well in lessons. However, some pupils, including several pupils with SEND, do not attend school as often as they should. As a result, they do not experience all the learning and wider opportunities that other pupils benefit from.

Leaders have carefully considered the programme that underpins pupils' personal development. Older pupils can apply for leadership roles within the school, such as school councillors and buddies for children in the early years. Pupils develop their understanding of taking an active role in society, for example by raising money for charities and thinking about the careers that they might pursue in the future. Leaders have firm plans in place to enhance the enrichment programme so that they foster pupils' wider development further still.

Governors are committed to their roles and they are determined to continually improve the quality of education for pupils. They are mindful of staff's well-being and their workload. Staff feel well supported by leaders, both personally and professionally.

A few parents expressed dissatisfaction with how well leaders tackle bullying. They also expressed concerns about the support for pupils with SEND. Inspectors found that leaders have acted appropriately to address these concerns.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have fostered a strong culture of safeguarding at Weston Primary School. They provide staff with up-to-date training in child protection. This helps staff to have a broad understanding of safeguarding issues. Staff know the actions to take should they have any concerns about pupils' welfare or the conduct of a colleague. Leaders and staff identify safeguarding issues early and provide pupils and their families with timely support.

Pupils have a thorough understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. For example, they know about the risks that they may encounter when online. Their understanding of safety is enriched when professionals, such as the police, visit the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum has not been finalised in the early years. In one or two areas of learning, leaders have not established exactly what children should learn and by when. This hampers how well some children acquire new knowledge and, on occasions, hinders their readiness for key stage 1. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking across all areas of learning in the early years.
- Some pupils, including those with SEND, do not attend school as often as they should. This means that they do not benefit from all the learning and enrichment activities that other pupils receive. Leaders should continue to reduce the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school.

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	111114
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10240659
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Russell Houghton
Headteacher	Helen Pitt
Website	www.weston.halton.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 October 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, governors have appointed a new headteacher.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils.
- Leaders do not make use of 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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and visited some lessons. They spoke with teachers and with pupils about their learning. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work. They also took account of other subjects across the curriculum.

- The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult. He also discussed reading with a group of older pupils.
- Inspectors observed how pupils behaved around the school, including at the breakfast club and during playtimes.
- Inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. They spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors reviewed school policies and procedures, including those relating to safeguarding. They scrutinised documentation, such as training records. Inspectors discussed safeguarding with governors, leaders and staff.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders of the school. The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

David Lobodzinski, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Berry	Ofsted Inspector

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