

# Inspection of Wisbech St Mary CofE Academy

Church Road, Wisbech St Mary, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 4RJ

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Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

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

Wisbech St Mary is a happy and caring school that sits at the heart of the community. Pupils like school. They talk enthusiastically and confidently about how they enjoy their learning.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils want to learn during lessons. Pupils understand and respect the school rules. They know and follow class routines. At social times, pupils play games together and chat in their friendship groups. School captains support younger children to play and socialise happily. Pupils have good manners. They are polite and courteous. The school is a very calm place to be.

Pupils respond to adults' high expectations for them to learn successfully and grow into well-rounded young people. All pupils are nurtured to do their very best.

Pupils are provided with a variety of clubs and activities. Pupils volunteer their time in the local community to undertake litter picking. The large school council arranges several events across the year to support the school and national charities. The school's annual fireworks display is a popular event, which draws together parents, staff, pupils, and the wider community.

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

The school has adopted an effective curriculum, including in the early years. Subject content is typically set out clearly and is well ordered. The curriculum resources help to support teachers to assess pupils and address any misunderstandings. The curriculum is broad and provides pupils with the opportunity to revisit information. However, sometimes staff do not present information clearly, meaning pupils are not always able to recall prior learning. Some pupils do not remember the important content they have been taught.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. Pupils' additional needs are identified quickly. Well-trained and experienced staff help pupils with SEND to access the curriculum and learn successfully.

Reading is prioritised. In Nursery, children are exposed to, and taught about the sounds around them. This prepares children for the daily phonics sessions that start in Reception. Pupils have regular opportunities to read individually and as a class. Where pupils struggle to read, they are helped through daily reading support. Most pupils learn to read fluently and accurately. The pupil reading ambassadors help to raise the profile of literacy across the school.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and during social times reflects a culture of high expectation. This is reflected in positive relationships between staff and pupils during lessons. As a result, pupils are confident to ask questions and broaden their

knowledge. Most pupils learn effectively. There is no low-level disruption to distract pupils from their work.

Current attendance is in line with national figures and leaders are taking action to address a fall in pupils' attendance. However, too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This includes the most vulnerable pupils.

The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their character. Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles. Pupils understand the importance of healthy relationships, and that families can be different in many ways.

Leaders are sensitive to the needs of the very youngest children. Staff make the most of teachable moments. Children are encouraged to talk and to socialise in the early years. Leaders recognise the importance of building positive relationships with parents. Leaders provide opportunities for parents to understand how to support their children's learning, such as the stay-and-play sessions.

The school is well led and managed. Leaders have gained the trust and support of staff and the local community. Staff appreciate the support they receive from leaders around workload. Staff receive training and professional development opportunities to improve their practice. Most parents are happy with the education their children receive. Governors understand their role in acting as a critical friend to school leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone in the school community. Leaders promote a culture of safeguarding through effective recruitment practices and regular staff training. There are robust and well-understood safeguarding systems at all levels. Staff recognise when a pupil may be at risk of harm. They refer any concerns to the safeguarding leaders quickly. Leaders keep accurate and appropriate records. Leaders make timely referrals to local agencies when necessary. Staff and pupils know how to share any worries and concerns. They know they will be listened to.

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

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

- While pupils enjoy their learning, sometimes staff do not present new ideas clearly. This means that some pupils find it difficult to recall the important knowledge leaders want them to know. Leaders should ensure that teachers are trained to teach content in a consistently precise and clear fashion. They should refine the current assessment systems to ensure that pupils remember important vocabulary, knowledge, and skills over time.

- The proportion of pupils regularly missing school is increasing. Leaders' actions are not sufficiently rigorous to address this. Leaders should ensure their strategies for identifying and resolving attendance concerns are robust and swift, so that all pupils attend school as often as they can.

## 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>	142810
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267760
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	187
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Helen Jackson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jaynie Lynch
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wsmacademy.co.uk">www.wsmacademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 and 11 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust.
- The school does not 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 has 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 met with the headteacher, acting headteacher, senior leaders, staff, trust leaders and representatives from the local governing board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history, mathematics, and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to

teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed safeguarding records. The lead inspector also scrutinised the single central record of pre-employment checks made on staff and reviewed information about the safer recruitment of staff.
- Inspectors met with pupils from different year groups to talk about their learning and experiences at school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents provided by the school. These included the school development plan, curriculum documentation and school policies.
- Inspectors considered the 46 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View. This included 29 responses from parents and carers to the free-text facility. Inspectors also considered the 24 responses to the staff questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Jonathan Rockey, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Daniel Short

His Majesty's Inspector

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