

Inspection of West Rise Junior School

Chaffinch Road, Langney, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN23 7SL

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring school where staff and leaders know every pupil. Relationships are warm and nurturing. Pupils know that they can always speak to someone from the well-being team if they need support. Pupils learn about their rights and responsibilities and the importance of respect and kindness. Most pupils behave sensibly and work with positive attitudes. They are happy here, and like attending this welcoming school.

Pupils appreciate the rich variety of outdoor learning experiences on offer. This includes opportunities to connect with the natural environment, including the local marshland. Through these experiences, pupils learn about the diversity of local wildlife. They also learn to respect and look after the world around them.

Pupils are encouraged to be active citizens and to take up responsibilities. The school council is a valued 'voice' in the school community. Through this, pupils contribute to decision-making. Recently, this has included creating the names and emblems for the 'communities' in the school.

Leaders aspire for pupils to learn an engaging curriculum and to achieve well. However, while pupils experience an interesting curriculum, they are not achieving well enough. This is reflected in the outcomes for pupils, including in reading and mathematics, in 2022.

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

Since the previous inspection, there has been a decline in standards and the quality of education. The school has also been through a difficult period and experienced some turbulence in leadership and staffing. Additionally, governors have not maintained strong enough oversight of aspects of the school or held leaders to account sufficiently well. The acting headteacher has worked tirelessly to 'steady the ship' and has ensured that the school community has remained 'connected'. Staff enjoy working at the school and feel supported.

Leaders' recent work to strengthen mathematics has been successful. Consequently, achievement is improving. In this subject, leaders have identified and sequenced, step by step, the knowledge that pupils need to learn. However, the curriculum in most other subjects is not so well defined. In many subjects, leaders have not been precise enough about the knowledge pupils need to acquire 'en route' to the school's curriculum goals. Consequently, staff do not have clear enough guidance about what to teach and assess, and pupils' knowledge is not secure.

Leaders have reinvigorated the school's wider reading curriculum and promote a love of reading. Many pupils are keen to read, and make use of the attractive school library. High-quality texts form the foundation of the English curriculum, which supports pupils' wider reading knowledge. However, the support for pupils who are still at an early stage of learning to read is not fully effective. This is because the

programme is not tailored precisely enough around pupils' knowledge gaps. As a result, some pupils are not catching up quickly enough and do not enjoy reading.

Teachers make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have access to the full curriculum offer. Pupils' additional needs are quickly identified and understood, and they are supported well in class. Some pupils with SEND receive effective nurturing support in the 'learning lodge'. This supports them to successfully access education with their peers in class.

Assessment processes are not fully in place. Teachers do not check well enough what pupils have learned and remembered in all subjects. Staff do not systematically identify or address weaknesses in pupils' learning. As a result, gaps in some pupils' knowledge become barriers to their learning. This is particularly so for pupils with low prior attainment.

Behaviour is calm and orderly, and there is a positive, respectful ethos in the school. Pupils enjoy school; however, some do not attend regularly. Persistent absence remains stubbornly high for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are rightly maintaining a sharp focus on improving attendance.

Pupils' personal development is enhanced through a wide range of enrichment, sporting and artistic activities. They also benefit from a well-planned curriculum for personal, social and health education. The school council elections enable pupils to learn about democratic processes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff receive regular, timely training to enable them to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. There is a strong culture of care that runs through the school. Pupils learn about safeguarding risks and how to stay safe.

Leaders ensure that, when needed, families receive timely early help. This includes connecting parents with local community support services. However, while safeguarding is effective, some aspects of safeguarding practice need tightening up. Leaders do not always connect new concerns well enough with information they already hold about pupils. Sometimes, they are not sufficiently 'professionally curious' about emerging concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Until recently, leaders have not acted quickly enough to address weaknesses in the curriculum. As a result, pupils are not benefiting from a good-quality education or achieving well enough. Leaders need to ensure that recent improvements to core subjects are embedded fully. They also need to refine their

curriculum thinking in other subjects and ensure that they identify with precision the component knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember.

- In many subjects, teachers' checks on how well pupils are learning are not precise enough. Learning gaps are not addressed well enough, and errors and weaknesses become embedded, particularly for pupils with low prior attainment. This limits pupils' achievement. Leaders need to ensure that assessment processes are used consistently well so that learning builds more effectively on what pupils know and can do. They need to make sure that staff more systematically address gaps and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge.
- The reading programme and support for pupils at an early stage of learning to read are not fully effective. This means that some pupils are not catching up quickly enough, and some lose interest and do not enjoy reading. Leaders need to strengthen the reading programme for these pupils to ensure that this is targeted more precisely on the specific gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Leaders do not always connect new information with previous safeguarding concerns about pupils well enough. Sometimes, they have not exercised sufficient professional curiosity. As a result, safeguarding arrangements are not as robust as they could be. Leaders need to take action to tighten up these aspects of their safeguarding arrangements.
- Governors have not maintained strong enough oversight of some aspects of the school. Consequently, they do not have the information they need to hold leaders to account fully. Governors need to implement stronger systems so that they have a better understanding of the school's work, hold leaders to account and more effectively fulfil their responsibilities.

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	114467
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10281755
Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Angus Scott
Headteacher	Helen Pentecost (Acting)
Website	www.westrisejunior.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The permanent headteacher was not in school at the time of the inspection and has been absent from the school since December 2022. During this time, the assistant headteacher has stepped up to be the acting headteacher.
- There have been many changes of staff since the previous inspection, and some recent leadership changes.
- 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 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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers,

spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also heard some pupils read.

- Inspectors sampled curriculum information and pupils' work in history and science and reviewed some pupils' writing.
- The lead inspector held meetings with three representatives of the local authority, including the school's alliance partner. She also held meetings with the local authority designated officer for safeguarding and the headteacher of the virtual school for looked after children.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair and the vice-chair of governors.
- Inspectors met with the acting headteacher and other senior leaders, including the leader with responsibility for SEND.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also reviewed a wide range of safeguarding documents, including information provided by the local authority. They scrutinised records of concerns, checked the single central record and held discussions with pupils, staff and governors.
- Inspectors took account of the views of staff and pupils through meetings with them and through staff's responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also talked to parents on the first day of the inspection.
- Inspectors also spent time talking with pupils during lunchtimes, and an inspector visited the breakfast club.

Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

James Everett

Ofsted Inspector

Phillip Blagg

His Majesty's Inspector

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