

Inspection of Widmer End Community Combined School

Estcourt Drive, Widmer End, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP15 6AH

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 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?

This is a happy school where pupils are confident and motivated to learn. Pupils like taking on additional responsibilities, such as being an ambassador or a school councillor. These opportunities develop pupils' leadership skills. Experiences such as residential trips help pupils to become more independent and prepare them well for their future lives.

Pupils feel safe and secure because nurturing staff work closely together as a dedicated team. Parents are kept well informed about their children's learning. In the early years, for example, parents are provided with information about how the school teaches phonics. Pupils rise to the high expectations of staff regarding behaviour. Lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils are confident that on the rare occasions when bullying occurs, staff are good at sorting it out.

Teachers expect pupils to work hard in lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They want to please their teachers and do their best. There is a strong focus on making sure that pupils learn about healthy lifestyles. Staff use lessons and assemblies to teach pupils about eating healthily and exercising regularly. For example, pupils grow herbs on the school allotment patch and enjoy starting each day with running the daily mile.

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

The school is flourishing. As soon as the headteacher joined, she put in place a programme of rapid improvements. This included an overhaul of the curriculum, a new approach to behaviour and attendance, and a review of many policies and procedures. These have all had a strong impact on pupils' achievement. Staff are enthusiastic and determined to provide a good quality of education for pupils.

The curriculum is well designed. Leaders aim to be a community of learning by raising expectations and achieving high standards. Curriculum plans clearly identify the most important knowledge that staff want pupils to learn and the order in which it should be taught. This has the positive impact of enabling pupils to build their knowledge and understanding systematically as they move through the school. However, many subject leaders are new and have not yet reviewed how well pupils are learning across the curriculum.

Teachers support the school's intentions for the curriculum well. In lessons, they ask challenging questions and provide many opportunities for pupils to revisit past learning. Pupils work well together and rarely experience any disruption to their learning due to poor behaviour. Teachers make detailed checks in many subjects about the knowledge that pupils know and remember. However, in a few subjects, this process of checking is still developing. The curriculum is carefully adapted to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Children in the Nursery get off to a strong start. Teachers check children's starting points and use this information to plan activities that help children to flourish. Teachers begin to teach phonics in the Nursery Year, and this enables children to have a flying start when they enter the Reception class. The environment in the early years is exciting and promotes children's curiosity. For example, the investigation station in the Reception class enables pupils to look at dinosaur bones through magnifying glasses.

There is a passion for reading throughout the school. Leaders know the importance of getting pupils to read fluently. They have ensured that staff have expert knowledge of how to teach phonics. Pupils read carefully chosen books that match the sounds they already know. As one pupil said with pride, 'I can read all of the books in this box, every single one of them.' Teachers make sure that those pupils who need additional support are given effective help to enable them to catch up.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development well. Pupils' social and relationship skills are enhanced through learning about the school values of unity, trust, courage, curiosity, respect and kindness. They learn about an inspirational person who typifies each value. For example, recently pupils had a visit from a Paralympian who showed great courage. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of British values, including democracy, diversity and tolerance. They have access to a wide range of clubs, including Indian dancing and knitting. Pupils show a keen interest in conserving the environment, such as in forest school or topics about sustainable power.

Leaders and staff are continually looking for ways to improve, as they want nothing but the best for the pupils. Staff say that leaders are mindful of their workload. Governors know the school's strengths and priorities for development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. They receive regular training. They know about the potential signs of abuse and the procedures to follow to report any concerns. Leaders have ensured that there is an appropriate system in place to monitor and filter content on the school's internet system.

Pupils understand about how to keep safe in the community through the curriculum and special assemblies. They learn about the importance of internet safety. They learn, for example, about the need to have strong passwords and not to give out personal information when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Many subject leaders are new to their role and have not fully checked how effectively the curriculum is being implemented. This means that they do not

have a secure understanding of how well pupils are learning. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders are equipped with the skills and knowledge to review the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning.

- In a few subjects, teachers are not clear about what pupils have previously learned and do not check sufficiently well what they remember. This means that staff do not consistently enable pupils to build on secure knowledge. Leaders should ensure that staff have an effective method of checking what pupils already know to inform future teaching.

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	110335
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10269164
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Laura Air
Headteacher	Gemma Hillier
Website	www.widmerend.bucks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher joined the school in September 2021. A number of teaching staff left the school shortly after the current headteacher was appointed. The deputy headteacher's post was made full time in January 2023.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school has a Nursery provision for three- and four-year-old children that is managed by the governing body.

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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers,

spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.

- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads to review records. An inspector scrutinised the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors also spoke with governors, staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- There was a meeting with governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector had a telephone call with a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of other school documents and policies, including the school development plan, external reviews of the school and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments, were considered. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and pupils. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils by speaking with them during lessons, in meetings and at breaktimes.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Martin Dyer

Ofsted Inspector

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