

Inspection of a good school: Writtle Junior School

Margaretting Road, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3HG

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 July 2023

Outcome

Writtle Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Writtle Junior School is a welcoming and inclusive school where staff know the pupils and their families well. Pupils feel valued as individuals. They are all greeted by their name as they arrive at the school gate in the morning.

Pupils achieve well because leaders have high expectations for them. They are happy and enjoy learning. They benefit from a curriculum that develops their knowledge and understanding in most subjects. A range of opportunities help pupils to develop their love of reading. Books are everywhere on site, including in the recently created library pod.

Pupils participate in a range of exciting trips, clubs and activities that enrich their education. These include visits to museums, art galleries and outdoor activity centres. Leaders work hard to ensure that all pupils are able to take part in these.

Pupils are keen to have responsibilities. Prefects organise the Year 6 leaving party. They look for and provide support to younger pupils at playtimes.

Pupils behave maturely and are focused on their learning. They work well together in lessons and on team projects. Bullying is rare. If it does happen, staff deal with it quickly.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know there is always an adult they can talk to if they have a worry.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum in most subjects is well designed. Leaders have carefully considered what skills and knowledge they want pupils to learn. In science, for example, pupils revisit prior learning on living things in Year 3 and build on this in lessons about humans as animals in Year 5. Teachers use questioning and quizzes to check that pupils understand what they need to know to move on. They provide effective catch-up

support when it is needed. In a few subjects, leaders have not been clear enough about what pupils should learn and when. In these subjects, it is harder for teachers to decide what to teach and how to check what pupils have learned.

Leaders prioritise support for pupils with SEND. They are determined to see all pupils succeed and work closely with parents to ensure that plans to support pupils are accurate and refined. Teachers successfully make adaptations to lessons and resources in order to make them accessible to all pupils.

Most pupils become fluent, confident readers with a passion for literature. The curriculum sets out the class text that each class will read together, through which teachers develop the planned sequence of learning. Pupils enjoy choosing books from the class library. Those pupils who struggle or fall behind are given additional support to develop their phonics and comprehension skills. All staff are well trained so that they have the right level of expertise to help pupils, including those with SEND, develop their reading skills.

Pupils' attitudes to learning and in lessons are extremely positive. Staff expect pupils to behave well and concentrate on their work. There is no disruption in lessons and pupils play well together outside. Parents have positive views of the behaviour of pupils in the school.

Leaders have planned a range of memorable experiences to support pupils' learning. For example, in design and technology, Year 5 pupils work as a team to design and build a working model of a car. They then brand and market this as part of a car show. Year 6 pupils learn about business and marketing in an enterprise project. They create a product, learning about design and budgeting, and then prepare it to sell with the intention of making a profit.

Staff offer many different lunchtime and after-school activities, including sports and hobby-based clubs. These activities support the development of pupils' talents and interests. Leaders check that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or who have SEND, are able to benefit and enjoy attending these clubs.

Staff appreciate leaders and governors' consideration of their workload and well-being. Leaders place emphasis on creating time and opportunities for staff to learn from and support each other. This enables staff to fulfil their roles effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders ensure that those at the school know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil's welfare. Leaders keep accurate and detailed records, and take timely action to involve external agencies when appropriate. Leaders use effective recruitment practices to ensure that new staff are suitable to work with children. Governors monitor the safeguarding procedures of the school regularly and thoroughly.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, both in and out of school, including when they are online. Leaders prioritise the mental health and well-being of staff and pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The planning in a few subjects is not as well developed as other subjects. The important knowledge that all pupils should learn has not been clearly identified. This means that staff do not always know what information they need to prioritise in their teaching and how this should be checked. Leaders should ensure that all subjects are planned in detail so that teachers know precisely what to teach and when. Leaders should ensure that all teachers know how to check how well pupils understand what they have been taught.

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 school to be good in October 2013.

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	115047
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10288441
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	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nic Adams
Headteacher	Nicholas Taylor
Website	www.writtlejuniors.org
Date of previous inspection	25 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision,

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 this into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, history, design and technology, art and science. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, held discussions with teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of the pupils' work. He observed pupils reading to a member of staff.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, and curriculum leaders.
- The inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair.
- The inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority.

- The inspector met with safeguarding leaders and reviewed the single central record of recruitment checks. He reviewed school documents concerning safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- There were 81 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, which were considered alongside 75 free-text comments from parents.
- There were 170 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school pupils. The inspector spoke to individuals and groups of pupils during the inspection.
- There were 24 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff. These were considered alongside the inspector's discussions with staff throughout the inspection to gather their views.

Inspection team

Michael Thomas, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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