

Inspection of Woodchurch CofE Primary School

Church Lane, Woodchurch, Wirral, Merseyside CH49 7LS

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have been failed by this school. They do not receive the quality of education that they are entitled to or deserve. Pupils do not benefit from a curriculum that enables them to gain the knowledge that they need to thrive.

Pupils do not achieve well. The school has low expectations for pupils' achievement, especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND do not get the additional help that they need to succeed.

Pupils are happy at school. They benefit from caring relationships with staff. Pupils are confident that the adults in school will listen to their worries.

Pupils mostly behave well. However, there is variation in the school's expectations for pupils' behaviour. Some pupils' learning is interrupted by the behaviour of their classmates. Pupils do not learn as well as they should.

Pupils enjoy the trips that leaders provide. For example, older pupils look forward to their residential visits to Wales and London. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests beyond this are more limited.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has been slow to recognise or to take action to address the decline in the quality of education that pupils receive. Governors do not have an understanding of their responsibilities and do not carry out their roles effectively. They have failed to hold the school to account sufficiently well. Moreover, governors have not carried out or fulfilled their statutory duties.

The school does not identify the needs of pupils with SEND in a timely manner. Staff do not have the knowledge or expertise to provide effective support to meet the needs of these pupils. Pupils with SEND achieve poorly over time.

The school does not have a secure understanding of what constitutes an ambitious and well-designed curriculum. In key stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is weak. It does not match the scope of the national curriculum. Too little thought has been given to what pupils need to learn and when this content should be taught.

Subject leadership is underdeveloped because the school has not invested in building expertise across the school. The design of subject curriculums and the guidance provided to staff are not effective due to weaknesses in subject leadership. This contributes to a lack of capacity to tackle the weaknesses across the school.

The school has not provided effective training for staff across the school to gain the knowledge and skills that they need to teach the curriculum well. Consequently, staff are ill equipped to design and support learning for the pupils in their classes. The checks on what pupils have misunderstood or need to know next are weak. As a

result, pupils' daily experience of learning in many subjects is a series of disconnected activities. Pupils remember little of what they have been taught, and they struggle to use their previous knowledge to help them with new learning. They do not learn all that they should to be successful. Pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.

In the early years, the school has recently begun to address curriculum weaknesses and given more thought to what it intends children to learn and when this should happen. Consequently, children in the early years now benefit from a curriculum that is increasingly meeting their learning needs. However, this work is at an early stage. At present, opportunities to support children to deepen their understanding and extend their learning do not happen routinely. This means that children are not prepared well enough to meet the demands of the key stage 1 curriculum.

A new phonics programme is providing staff with greater guidance on the sounds and letters that pupils should learn. However, the school has not made sure that staff have the subject knowledge or expertise to ensure that pupils, particularly those who struggle to read, build their knowledge of phonics securely. Consequently, the support for these pupils does not help them to catch up quickly with their peers. In addition, the books that these pupils read are not well matched to the sounds that they know. This means that these pupils do not become confident, fluent readers. This hampers their success in other areas of the curriculum.

In the early years, children settle into routines quickly. They learn to share resources. However, the learning of some older pupils is adversely affected by low-level disruption. This prevents pupils from learning as well as they should.

A small number of parents and carers expressed concern about how issues, including bullying, are dealt with. However, school records show that the school takes swift and appropriate action to address concerns that are raised, including bullying.

The school ensures that pupils' physical and emotional health is supported. Pupils are taught about healthy relationships and how to keep safe. However, other aspects of pupils' personal development, such as their understanding of fundamental British values, are not secure. Pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they should be.

The school has recently started to work with the local authority to begin to address the significant weaknesses in the education on offer. As part of this work, an external review of governance has been completed. However, it is early days, and there is limited evidence of impact.

While the school engages positively with parents about their children's education, it underestimates the impact of curriculum weaknesses both on pupils' education and staff's workload and well-being. The school is overly reliant on external support and lacks the capacity to bring about much-needed change.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculums for many subjects are weak. The school has not identified what pupils should learn and the order in which this should be taught. This means that pupils, including those with SEND, experience a disconnected curriculum which lacks coherence. The school must make sure that the curriculum is designed and implemented to fully align with the national curriculum. This is to ensure that pupils are prepared for the next stage of their education by enabling them to gain a rich body of knowledge over time.
- The school has not ensured that staff are trained to deliver the phonics programme effectively. In addition, the school does not have effective systems in place to help those pupils who are struggling to read to catch up. This means that pupils, particularly those who find reading difficult, do not become confident, fluent readers. The school must ensure that staff have the expertise that they need to deliver the phonics programme effectively. The school must also ensure that pupils who struggle to read are supported to catch up quickly with their peers.
- The needs of pupils with SEND are not identified swiftly or accurately enough. Staff lack the expertise to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. This means that pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should. The school must ensure that staff are suitably trained to identify and meet the needs of pupils with SEND so that these pupils are supported to achieve well.
- The school has not ensured that staff have the knowledge and skills to teach the curriculum effectively. They are ill equipped to design and support learning for pupils in Years 1 to 6. As a result, pupils do not build on their learning over time. The school must ensure that staff receive the training that they need to deliver a curriculum that allows pupils to gain the knowledge and skills they need to be successful.
- Opportunities to support, extend and deepen children's learning in the early years are frequently missed. This means that children are not prepared well enough to meet the demands of the key stage 1 curriculum. The school should ensure that staff in the early years are equipped to deliver the curriculum effectively.
- Subject leadership is ineffective. A lack of training and guidance means that there is insufficient capacity to design and support the delivery of an effective curriculum. This contributes to pupils' weak achievement. The school must ensure that it improves the quality and effectiveness of subject leadership so that the curriculum enables pupils to be successful.
- Until recently, governors were not aware of the significant weaknesses of the school or the negative impact that this continues to have on the achievement of

pupils and on staff's workload and well-being. Governors also lack the appropriate knowledge, skills or understanding to be able to fulfil their statutory duties. Governors must take urgent action to ensure that they are fulfilling their statutory duties and that they develop their ability to hold leaders to account effectively.

- The school has not ensured that there are consistently high expectations or consistent approaches to pupils' behaviour. In some lessons, pupils do not learn as well as they could, as their learning is interrupted by low-level disruption. The school should ensure that all staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and that there are consistent systems in place to ensure pupils can learn without distraction.
- Pupils are not taught to understand the importance of fundamental British values and what these mean to them as citizens in modern Britain. In addition, the experiences that pupils participate in beyond the academic curriculum are limited. Pupils are not prepared well enough for life in modern Britain. The school should ensure that pupils have opportunities that broaden their horizons and support them to become responsible and active citizens while preparing them for the diverse society in which they live.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	105067
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10268355
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Debbi Jeffrey
Headteacher	Brian McGregor
Website	www.woodchurchceprimary.com
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Chester. The last section 48 inspection took place in November 2022. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in 2027.
- Leaders make use of one dual registered alternative provision placement.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke with subject leaders, spoke to pupils about their learning and evaluated their work in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese.
- Inspectors talked with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with the leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour, early years, SEND and pupils' personal development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their wider experience of school. They looked at a range of policies and documents related to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Rebecca Jewitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Elaine Jackson

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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