

# Inspection of Woolston C of E Aided Primary School

Epping Drive, Woolston, Warrington, Cheshire WA1 4QL

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Inspection dates: 24 and 25 October 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

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

Pupils flourish at this welcoming and aspirational school where everyone wants the best for them. Pupils' positive educational experience is reflected in their high rates of attendance and their eager smiles.

Pupils are happy in school. They forge strong relationships with the staff and with each other. Pupils are encouraged to talk about any of their worries and are offered the support that they need to thrive. This helps them to feel safe and secure. Pupils enjoy learning. They are keen to work hard in their lessons. Pupils are proud to reach the high expectations that the school has for their achievement. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve highly in many subjects. This means that they can embark on the next stage of their education with confidence.

Pupils' behaviour around school and their attitudes towards learning are exemplary. They are polite, friendly and articulate. Pupils are keen to carry out a range of special roles, such as peer mentors and play leaders, which encourage them to become mutually supportive of each other.

Pupils appreciate the many clubs on offer. They take pride in representing their school in sporting competitions.

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

From the start of the Reception Year, the school provides a stimulating and ambitious curriculum which motivates all pupils, including those with SEND, to engage meaningfully in learning.

In most subjects, the important content, including the subject-specific vocabulary, that pupils need to learn has been clearly identified. The school has given careful consideration to the order in which this knowledge is taught. This ensures that pupils build on their previous learning when presented with new information.

In most subjects, teachers receive helpful information and guidance about how to deliver curriculums effectively. They use their well-developed subject knowledge to explain new ideas clearly. Teachers check pupils' understanding carefully and address any misconceptions swiftly. The school's particular focus on developing vocabulary ensures that pupils access new curriculum content with confidence.

The additional needs of pupils with SEND are identified early and accurately. Teachers are highly skilled in their use of strategies to ensure that these pupils access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers and achieve well. While pupils develop independence in their learning, well-trained teaching assistants also offer appropriate support when necessary.

Pupils progress well through the curriculum and deepen their understanding of important concepts. They achieve high levels of success in many subjects. However, in a small number of subjects where curriculums are less well established, teachers' subject knowledge is not as secure. This means that, in these areas, pupils' achievement is not as strong as it could be.

Reading is pivotal throughout the school's curriculum. This is understood well by parents and carers. They appreciate the information that the school provides about how they can support their children with reading at home.

As soon as they start in the Reception Year, children quickly learn how to recognise sounds and their corresponding letters. Staff deliver the clearly structured phonics programme consistently well. Pupils practise reading regularly with books that match the sounds that they have learned. Any pupils who need extra help receive tailored support so that they catch up quickly with their peers. This means that almost all pupils become fluent and accurate readers by the end of Year 2.

Pupils have plentiful opportunities to read independently for pleasure and to further their knowledge through research. They become confident and enthusiastic readers who are eager to talk about their favourite books and authors.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. The tone is set in the early years, where children listen intently and interact happily with each other. Throughout the school, pupils display highly positive attitudes to learning. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour, so pupils can concentrate without interruption.

The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of diversity in modern British society. Pupils learn about people with different backgrounds, faiths and families. They adopt a mature and thoughtful approach to discussions about themes such as democracy and equality. Pupils are keen to make sure that everyone is included. They demonstrate empathy for others and understand that everyone, regardless of their differences, should be treated with respect.

Governors are dedicated and keen to make a positive difference. Although they provide valuable support to the school, some governors lack sufficient awareness of some aspects of the school's curriculum. This limits their ability to offer appropriate levels of challenge.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate that policies have been reviewed to prevent unnecessary workload. For example, the new streamlined approach to assessment affords teachers more time to respond to pupils' needs. The school keeps parents well informed about their children's achievements. Parents are resoundingly positive about the school. They particularly value the level of care shown towards their children by the whole-staff team.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In a small number of subjects teachers lack sufficient clarity and guidance to deliver the curriculums effectively. This prevents some pupils from achieving as well as they could. The school should work to strengthen the implementation of these subjects and ensure that governors get the information that they need to contribute to the ongoing development of the curriculum.

## 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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111366
<b>Local authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10242312
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	214
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Rosalind Hayes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Dillon
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.woolstonprimary.co.uk">www.woolstonprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 November 2008, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- The school is a part of the Diocese of Liverpool. Its most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character was in June 2019. The next section 48 inspection is expected to take place before 2026.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. The leadership structure has been reviewed and the deputy headteacher role has been replaced by two assistant headteacher positions. There have been several changes to governing body membership, including the appointment of a new chair of governors.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

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

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other leaders. They met with subject leaders and other members of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with five members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority. She also spoke on the telephone with a representative of the Diocese of Liverpool and with the school improvement partner.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- The inspectors carried out curriculum deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculums with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also reviewed aspects of several other subjects in the school's curriculum.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and in lessons. They spoke with pupils to discuss their views of the school, their learning, their behaviour and safety.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments. Inspectors also spoke with several parents. Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.
- The inspectors considered a range of documents shared by school leaders, including the school improvement plan and the records of governing body meetings.

### **Inspection team**

Janette Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Elaine Jackson

Ofsted Inspector

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