

Inspection of a good school: Wolvercote Primary School

First Turn, Wolvercote, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX2 8AQ

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 March 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Mandy Hook. This school is part of River Learning Trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paul James, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jeremy Paul Warwick Long.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love their joyful and vibrant school. They develop a thirst for knowledge and enjoy sharing what they know and have learned. The school is aspirational for all pupils. From the very beginning, in the early years, children achieve exceptionally well. Pupils who are disadvantaged, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), thrive here because of the high-quality support that they receive. By the end of key stage 2, all pupils are extremely well prepared for their next stage of education.

Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are impeccably polite, kind and respectful. They embody the school's value of 'active learning' as they celebrate effort, creativity and improvement. Pupils are, rightly, proud of the school's culture of inclusion. Break and lunchtimes are energetic and full of activity and play. As in lessons, social times are inclusive. Pupils look after each other. They also know that staff will help if they ever need it. This help is rarely required, as pupils cooperate with maturity as they share games and discuss ideas. This is a nurturing and safe environment, where pupils learn important life-long skills, such as how to be responsible and independent.

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

The curriculum has been developed and adapted skilfully to engage pupils and develop their deep understanding of each subject. Starting in the early years, high ambition underpins the activities and interactions between staff and pupils. Adults develop children's communication and language skills expertly so that they become confident and

articulate speakers. In Reception, children volunteer to stand up in front of the other children to explain their thinking. The environment in the early years is filled with meaningful opportunities to learn about letters and numbers. Children develop excellent learning habits ready for their next stage. They concentrate for long periods on their exciting activities, exploring, being curious and learning in every moment.

Staff teach exceptionally well. Pupils benefit from frequent opportunities to revisit and remember what they have been taught. When pupils struggle to explain or understand some new learning, staff identify this quickly and provide support or prompts. These ensure that every pupil learns the important knowledge in each lesson. All pupils are expected to think deeply. This excellent support provided means that they do, including pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and pupils with SEND. Staff are highly skilled in adapting learning. This is because they have detailed knowledge of each subject. Staff use questioning to great effect to draw out what pupils know and challenge pupils to problem solve and develop their ideas further.

Pupils achieve very highly across the curriculum. They quickly learn to read and, consequently, develop a love of reading. Pupils with SEND and those who struggle with early reading are given precise support when needed. The school is, rightly, determined to remove barriers to learning. This means that where pupils have lower starting points, they catch up and achieve very well. Across all subjects, pupils develop mastery. They debate, discuss and build on each other's views habitually, such as when explaining the causes of earthquakes or the effects of global warming. The school has ensured that the curriculum is rich in vocabulary so that all pupils can talk precisely about what they know.

Lessons are highly focused. Pupils know that they have excellent teaching here, and they want to make the most of every opportunity. They celebrate when they demonstrate the school's values, giving each other certificates and writing their own names in 'the golden book'. Pupils proudly take on responsibilities in the school through the many ambassador roles. They also develop public speaking skills through presenting in assemblies. Pupils are prepared very well for life beyond Wolvercote Primary. They learn about healthy relationships, online safety and anti-bullying. Pupils are highly curious and love learning about the wider world, diversity and different cultures.

The school is led by determined, supportive and highly knowledgeable staff. The culture here is one of continuous improvement and unapologetic high expectations for everyone in the school community. Staff love working here because of the inclusive ethos through which everyone knows that they are valued. Training and development are always focused on making a meaningful difference to the lives of pupils without adding unnecessary workload for staff. Governors and the trust offer excellent support and challenge to help the school in fulfilling its high ambitions for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 predecessor school, Wolvercote Primary School, to be good in December 2012.

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	142384
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10296432
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	338
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jeremy Paul Warwick Long
CEO of the trust	Paul James
Headteacher	Mandy Hook
Website	www.wolvercoteprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2018

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2022.

Information about this inspection

- 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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils during playtimes and in lessons.
- Responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, including parents' free-text comments, were considered. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.

Inspection team

Ally Aldridge-Gibbons, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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