

# Inspection of Underwood West Academy

Newcastle Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 3LF

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Inspection dates:	12 and 13 November 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The principal of this school is Laura Jones. This school is part of The Aspire Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Kevin Simpson and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sue Bowen.

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

This is a school that wraps its arms around the pupils and their families. The school is a warm and welcoming place to learn. Pupils can be themselves and let their personalities shine through. They do so with respect and care for each other. They trust adults to help them. Pupils learn and play together harmoniously and so are ready and happy to learn.

The school sets high aspirations for pupils' achievement. More pupils are meeting these expectations well. The high-quality support that pupils receive, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), gives them the very best chance to achieve.

Pupils are prepared exceptionally well to become responsible members of the community. Some proudly get involved in local regeneration projects. These include planting community gardens, having a say in the development of the local park and supporting local refugees. Others have attended the trust's debating event. The school's cooking club gives parents and carers, alongside pupils, the opportunity to come together to learn about healthy food. Pupils also benefit from opportunities to access a range of clubs and other activities that further extend their talents and interests. The school's 'bread and butter' group, alongside the plethora of community outreach work that the school does, means it is a hub for the local people.

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

The school is determined that pupils, including those with SEND, will succeed. They have designed and implemented an ambitious curriculum. The school ensures that it provides teachers with strong subject knowledge and high-quality training. This allows teachers to present subject matter clearly and effectively in class.

The published data does not reflect the quality of education that current pupils enjoy. High numbers of pupils with English as an additional language, who join the school during key stage 2, do not have the time to benefit fully from the curriculum offer before they leave at the end of Year 6.

Staff identify the needs of pupils with SEND swiftly. They are adept at supporting these pupils well. They adapt the curriculum delivery successfully to meet pupils' individual needs. Within lessons, staff effectively check what pupils know. Nevertheless, the systems for checking what pupils know and remember over time are less effective. This means that, from time-to-time, misconceptions and gaps in learning go unaddressed. As a result, some pupils are unable to make connections with their prior learning.

Pupils learn to read as soon as they start school. Teachers use the training they receive to deliver the phonics programme skilfully. Pupils use phonics to blend sounds and read words. Books match the sounds that pupils learn, which helps them gain confidence. The school fosters a love of reading and ensures that all pupils see themselves represented in the texts used. Many older pupils said that the week's best lessons are the reading ones. They look forward to their class teacher sharing a book with them at the end of the

school day. This is not consistently replicated in terms of early writing. On occasion, the school does not give pupils the best models for writing. In addition, sometimes it does not choose the most appropriate activities to develop pencil grip, letter formation or to apply their phonic knowledge too. These weaknesses linger as they move through school. This hinders the quality of pupils' written communication.

Relationships between pupils and adults are positive. Staff use supportive and encouraging language in the classroom. Pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. The school teaches pupils to understand their emotions and ways to manage them. Attendance is an improving picture. The school promotes the message that any time away from school can lead to missing out important aspects of learning. Pupils want to be in school as they have a thirst for learning new things.

The school has ensured that personal development is at the heart of its work. Pupils are empowered through a wide range of opportunities to make a tangible difference to their school community. Pupils strive to be the best version of themselves by aspiring to live out the school's values. Cultural ambassadors are exemplary role models for other pupils. They organise 'super learning days' to share about their home countries and cultures. Pupils talked to inspectors about the joy that they get in sharing and celebrating their differences and similarities with each other. They impressively recognised this as important in learning to respect each other and to promote peace in the world.

The school and those responsible for governance endeavour to improve the standards of education year on year. They are highly ambitious for pupils. Parents, and carers, value the close-knit school community and the support that the school gives to them. Staff feel valued and proud to work at this school. They appreciate the support offered by school leaders around their well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In some subjects, the school does not ensure that pupils remember what they have been taught over time. As a result, some pupils cannot confidently recall or build on their previous learning as well as they might. The school should ensure that pupils' learning is secure before introducing new concepts.
- Some pupils do not master accurate letter formation by the time they leave Year 2. This hinders their writing fluency as they move through the key stage 2 curriculum. The school should ensure that staff provide accurate written communication models and appropriate activities so that the pupils develop the skills that they need to be successful writers.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143153
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire East
<b>Inspection number</b>	10348342
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	500
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sue Bowen
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Kevin Simpson
<b>Principal</b>	Laura Jones
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.underwoodwest.cheshire.sch.uk">www.underwoodwest.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	20 and 21 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Underwood West Primary Academy converted to become an academy in December 2016.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not use alternative provision for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English including early reading, mathematics, geography and design technology. They met with subject leaders and with teachers. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in other subjects. They met with leaders, spoke with pupils and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects.
- 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.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the local governing body and the board of trustees. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the responses to the online parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey, including the free-text comments.

### **Inspection team**

Helen Friend, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Gower-Jones

Ofsted Inspector

Alex Farrow

Ofsted Inspector

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