

Inspection of Westlands Primary School

Homewood Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1XN

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 November 2024

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

The headteacher of this school is Victoria Pettett. This school is part of Swale Academies 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), Michael Wilson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Goodson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Westlands Primary School. As soon as they join in Reception, children receive excellent care and support. The school encourages pupils to become a STAR by being safe, trustworthy, aspirational and respectful.

The school has recently made improvements to the curriculum in both the core and other subjects. As a result, pupils are now starting to achieve more highly, although there are still gaps in their knowledge in some subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in the school receive excellent support with their learning.

The school has also recently introduced a new behaviour policy. As a result, most pupils behave well in class and around the school. However, pupils reported that a small number of their peers can sometimes be unkind. The school is actively addressing this issue.

The school ensures that pupils develop key life skills for the future. All pupils, including those in the early years, take part in lessons about nature and the outdoors. Pupils also benefit from cooking classes in the school's cooking room. Younger pupils visit the local library and register for their own library card. Older pupils take part in bike riding lessons.

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

The school has rightly prioritised reading in recent years. Well-trained staff teach the new phonics programme effectively. Children in Reception engage enthusiastically in stories, songs and rhymes. Pupils read books that match the sounds they are learning in class. This means that they become increasingly fluent readers as they move through the school. Those at risk of falling behind are identified quickly and supported to keep up and catch up. The school is working hard to ensure that pupils read more independently, particularly at home.

The curriculum is broad, ambitious, and engaging. The school has recently introduced new curriculum programmes in several subjects. Starting from the early years, the key knowledge and vocabulary that pupils must learn is carefully selected and ordered. For example, pupils in Year 4 draw on their learning of the Stone Age from the previous year when studying the Celts. This helps pupils make sense of their learning. Pupils deepen and extend their knowledge of mathematical concepts and procedures as they progress through the school. However, in a small number of subjects the revised curriculum is not fully embedded across all year groups. As a result, pupils have not been able to build up a secure body of knowledge over time.

Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and explain key information to pupils clearly. The school identifies pupils with SEND quickly. Staff receive the right level of training to support these pupils to access the curriculum at an appropriate level. Those pupils with the most complex needs are supported with a more personalised provision.

Children in the early years get off to a flying start. They settle very quickly because routines and expectations are clear and well established. Adults skilfully support children's

development across the different areas of learning. Language and vocabulary thread through everything. Staff use every interaction to develop children's learning and understanding. Children learn how to manage risk, for example, when playing outside on balance apparatus and at the water table.

The school has recently reviewed and revised its behaviour policy. Pupils feel safe in school and know who to talk to if they are worried about anything. Staff deal with low-level disruption in lessons quickly so that it does not hinder pupils' learning. Staff feel well supported when dealing with any poor behaviour by pupils. Reasonable adjustments are made for children with complex needs. However, a small number of pupils do not meet the school's high expectations for behaviour. As a result, the atmosphere around the school site is not always as calm and purposeful as it should be. The attendance of pupils is a high priority for the school. Leaders work hard to address any absences. As a result, pupils' attendance is improving.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take on positions of responsibility. They can become school ambassadors, librarians or peer mediators. Vulnerable pupils, in particular, benefit from excellent pastoral care. All pupils can take part in clubs including origami, computing or rock band. Pupils enjoy the new lunchtime activities. The school is working to broaden the opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and wider cultural awareness.

The trust collaborates closely with the school. Staff are proud to work here. They appreciate leaders' proactive support for their well-being and mental health. The school continues to work hard to engage parents in their children's education, for example, through the family hub. Leaders at all levels are deeply committed to the children and families in the school community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school recently reviewed and revised its behaviour policy, but a small number of pupils need further support to behave appropriately. As a result, they sometimes act inappropriately towards staff and speak unkindly to other pupils. The school should continue to implement the behaviour policy robustly and systematically so that its expectations are fully understood and followed by all pupils.
- In some subjects, the school's curriculum is not fully embedded in classroom practice. This means that pupils do not deepen their subject-specific knowledge and understanding. The school must ensure that curricular intent is fully implemented in all subjects so that pupils learn subject content consistently well.

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	136270
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341666
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	493
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Goodson
CEO of the trust	Michael Wilson
Headteacher	Victoria Pettett
Website	www.westlandsprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Swale Academies Trust.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

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 evaluation 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the school senior leadership team, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the trust, including the CEO, the Director of Primary, the chair of the local governing body and a member of the trust board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted via Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted’s surveys for school staff and pupils.

Inspection team

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His Majesty’s Inspector

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