

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Westcourt Primary School

Silver Road, Gravesend, Kent DA12 4JG

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 May 2025

Outcome

Westcourt Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Mags Sexton. This school is part of Primary First Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by chief executive officer (CEO), Lorna Hamilton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stephen Rumbles.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils receive a warm welcome in this friendly school. They are happy and they are safe. Pupils enjoy looking after Woody and Rex, the school guinea pigs. Many pupils start the day in the school's breakfast club. This helps these pupils settle well for the day ahead. Pupils form very positive relationships with one another. Pupils appointed to the 'Anti-Bullying Crew' support their peers to remain good friends. Playtimes are engaging and joyful times for pupils. Pupils build towers using tyres, play in the sand pit and enjoy playing ball games with one another. Older pupils play with younger pupils, creating a family feel in the school.

The school is ambitious for pupils. Pupils produce a range of high-quality work that is celebrated across the school. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm in what they learn. As a result, pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to transfer confidently to the next phase of their education.

Pupils are courteous and behave well. They are respectful towards adults and to one another. They have a clear voice in the school. For example, pupils elected to the school's Learning Council work with school leaders to refine the curriculum.

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

The school provides a carefully structured curriculum that matches the needs and interests of the pupils well. The school ensures that teachers are clear about the knowledge pupils are to learn. Teachers receive helpful training that refines the way that they teach. As a result, teachers are knowledgeable and confident. Staff appreciate the actions that leaders take to help them to manage their workload.

Trustees and governors work effectively with school leaders. The school has a clear understanding of the improvements needed and works diligently to address this. The trust guides and supports staff expertly. They provide training for staff and coach leaders to strengthen their practice. Robust systems and structures provide governors and trustees with reliable evidence about the school's performance.

Pupils gain the knowledge they need to succeed in reading, writing and mathematics. Children in the early years explore stories and develop their phonics knowledge well. They engage in a range of purposeful play activities that help them to embed what they learn. Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2024 were not strong. This is because there has been some inconsistency in teaching in the past. The school has addressed this and supports pupils to catch up quickly through helpful interventions. As a result, pupils gain the reading knowledge needed to become confident and fluent readers. Pupils apply their English and mathematical knowledge when working across subjects. For example, they write eloquently in history and analyse data in science.

Teachers help pupils to embed new knowledge well. They encourage pupils to draw on what they have learned previously. They use key questions to help pupils to recall essential learning at the end of each unit of work. As a result, pupils connect what they already know with new content. Teachers identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. They use a range of helpful adaptive strategies in English and mathematics to support pupils with SEND. However, adaptations to support learning are not yet embedded in other subjects. This means that some pupils with SEND do not always gain the knowledge needed in some subjects.

Pupils behave well in class. They are proud of their school. They uphold the school rules and see these as fair. This creates a purposeful and calm atmosphere in class. Children in the early years form very positive relationships with one another. They learn to take turns and listen attentively in class. Pupils are confident that if they have a worry, there is an adult who will help to resolve this. Staff support pupils whose behaviour falls below their expectations with care and compassion. The school provides carefully tailored support for pupils who struggle to manage their emotions. As a result, pupils are resilient and confident. While school attendance has been low in the past, the school is now addressing this diligently. They support families of pupils whose attendance is low to make the improvements needed. As a result, attendance is improving for pupils whose attendance falls below the school's expectations.

The school provides a fulsome range of wider opportunities for pupils. Pupils attend a variety of clubs on offer. They benefit from visits beyond the school and visitors to the school. For example, pupils performed a Shakespeare play at a local theatre and visited a local care home to sing with the residents. Pupils take on a range of responsibilities in the school. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils vote for their peers who take on roles of responsibility in the school, modelling the democratic process. As a result, pupils feel empowered and responsible.

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 foundation subjects, teaching is not well adapted to meet the needs of some pupils with SEND. As a result, in these subjects, some pupils do not secure the most important knowledge or achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that staff have the expertise to adjust the curriculum to take account of pupils' barriers to learning and ensure that pupils with SEND gain the important subject knowledge they need.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2013.

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	144005
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10379906
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	321
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen Rumbles
CEO of the trust	Lorna Hamilton
Headteacher	Mags Sexton
Website	www.westcourt.kent.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Westcourt Primary School joined the Primary First Trust in February 2017.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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 any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in this evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, members of the governing body, other leaders and a range of staff.
- The inspector spoke to representatives of the trust.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including those related to governance of the school.
- The inspector considered the views of parents and carers through their responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector spoke to staff and considered the views of staff and pupils in the staff and pupil surveys. The inspector spoke to pupils and parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Graham Chisnell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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