Inspection of Willaston Church of England Primary School

Neston Road, Willaston, Neston, Cheshire CH64 2TN

Inspection dates:	28 and 29 February 2024

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are excited to come into school each day. They follow the school's vision, to treat others as they themselves want to be treated, remarkably well. Pupils are celebrated for their individuality. This helps them to feel happy. The school has exceptionally high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, consistently live up to these expectations. They achieve highly.

Pupils relish every opportunity to learn. Their behaviour is exemplary around the school. From the beginning of early years to Year 6, there is a calm and orderly atmosphere that enables pupils to focus completely on their learning.

Pupils take pride in their learning. They shine in all that they do. This is reflected in the exceptional quality of work that pupils produce. They are able to recall a sizeable amount of prior learning. By the end of Year 6, pupils are extremely well prepared for secondary school. Children in Reception Year also learn exceedingly well.

Pupils take full advantage of the vast array of enrichment activities on offer. For example, they benefit from exciting drama lessons and the opportunity to go on residential trips, some of which have a multicultural focus.

Staff ensure that pupils benefit from the vast array of clubs on offer, such as the fencing, mini-golf and art clubs. Pupils are particularly proud of their sports achievements and the displays of their artwork.

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

The school is extremely ambitious for pupils, including those with SEND. It has carefully mapped out the important knowledge that pupils should learn at each stage and in each subject. This broad and balanced curriculum flows seamlessly from the beginning of early years to Year 6.

Staff receive high-quality, ongoing training that enables them to craft curriculum content well. This also helps to ensure that the curriculum is delivered exactly as intended. Staff are expertly equipped to design learning activities that enable pupils to learn especially well.

Staff are adept at swiftly identifying pupils' misconceptions and misunderstandings. They use the school's assessment strategies well to identify where pupils may have gaps in their knowledge and to shape their future learning. Over time, pupils develop a deep body of knowledge that interconnects between subjects. Typically, they achieve well. In the past, when there has been a dip in attainment, the school has ensured that effective adjustments have been put in place to address this quickly.

The school has placed reading at the heart of the curriculum. Children learn about letters and the sounds they represent as soon as they begin in the Reception class. Pupils practise their reading using books that are carefully matched to the sounds that they already know. Staff routinely check that pupils are keeping up with the pace of the phonics programme. If pupils struggle with reading, skilled staff provide effective support to help them to catch up quickly. Most pupils become confident and fluent readers by the end of Year 2.

The school has successfully cultivated pupils' love of reading. Children in Reception Year listen to engaging stories and develop their communication and language skills well. Older pupils eagerly described their favourite books and authors. Pupils particularly enjoy reading for pleasure in the 'literacy mill' on the playground.

Pupils treat each other with kindness and respect. They are polite, friendly and eager to converse with adults. Pupils' rates of attendance are high. They know that attending school regularly will help them to learn all that they can.

The way that the school develops pupils' character is praiseworthy. Pupils pride themselves on making everyone feel welcome in their school, regardless of any differences that they may have. The school maximises opportunities for pupils to engage with their community. For instance, they raise money for the local hospice, and the choir sings at local events. Pupils in every year group delight in regular outdoor learning in the school's neighbouring meadow and allotment. In addition, pupils take pride in their roles of responsibility, such as those of sports ambassador and house captain.

Staff have been trained to identify quickly the additional needs that pupils may have. Pupils with SEND receive appropriate support, including from external professionals. Staff make necessary adaptations to their delivery of the curriculum. This enables pupils with SEND to learn successfully.

Governors are passionate about affording pupils as many opportunities to learn and grow as they can. They carry out their statutory duties effectively and hold the school to account for the quality of education that pupils receive.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about how the school takes their workload and well-being into consideration. For example, they value the time that they are allocated to fulfil their subject leadership roles.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	111245
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10294262
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Richard Hinds
Headteacher	Gary Graham
Website	www.willastonceprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	30 November and 1 December 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is led by an acting headteacher, who has been in post since January 2022.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- This Church of England school is in the Diocese of Chester. Its most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character was in March 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place by 2025.

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.

- Inspectors met with the acting headteacher, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a trusted adult.
- 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Ruth Moran, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sue Mills	Ofsted Inspector

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