

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

High Street, Waterbeach, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB25 9JU

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 March 2025

Outcome

Waterbeach Community Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this kind, nurturing school where staff help them to feel safe. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging and are keen to live up to the school's 'golden rules'. The atmosphere around school is calm and pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils are confident that staff will help them with any worries or concerns.

The school has high expectations for what pupils can achieve. It ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can access the curriculum effectively. Pupils enjoy the wide range of varied and challenging learning opportunities that the curriculum provides. These include young children learning about ducklings, to older ones whittling sticks or singing solo in front of the whole school. Through the curriculum, pupils develop confidence and improve their understanding of the wider world. As a result, they achieve well across a broad and balanced curriculum.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of educational visits, such as the three residential trips where they build confidence and independence ahead of starting secondary school. In addition, there are numerous extra-curricular clubs, including culinary adventures, French and yoga, which provide pupils with opportunities to extend their learning and hone their talents and interests.

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

Pupils generally achieve well, including in statutory assessment tests (SATs). This is due to a curriculum that, for the most part, is well sequenced and taught effectively. For example, children in the early years write regularly, helping them to become confident

and competent writers. The curriculum takes account of the school's context, such as pupils learning about their local area to develop a strong sense of pride in their school and village. Also, subject experts teach a few subjects. This successfully ensures that specific subject knowledge is taught well. For example, this is evident in Year 6 pupils' impressive sculpture work, as well as pupils' ability to play instruments.

Changes to the curriculum are still taking place in some subjects. For example, in mathematics, the school has recently identified that the curriculum is not delivered consistently across all classes. Teachers did not routinely set tasks that enable pupils to build sufficient knowledge or deepen their thinking. The new curriculum now provides clear guidance to staff on how it should be taught. As a result, pupils are remembering more of the key content.

In some areas of the wider curriculum subjects, teachers do not check carefully enough what pupils are learning. Where this happens, pupils' misconceptions are not picked up promptly or consistently and pupils continue to make errors. As a result, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge that are not identified quickly and dealt with.

Reading is at the heart of the school's chosen curriculum. The school supports pupils to learn to read fluently. There are opportunities for staff coaching that help develop staff expertise around the teaching of reading. Typically, staff deliver the phonics programme well, including ensuring that pupils read books containing the letter sounds they know. Staff routinely check pupils' phonics knowledge and provide prompt and effective support for any pupils who may be falling behind.

Starting in the Reception Year, the school promptly identifies pupils with SEND. Clear targets are set, underpinned by effective strategies that help pupils to learn alongside their peers. When needed, there is additional support, such as with speech and language. This helps pupils to achieve well from their starting points.

Pupils' behaviour is often kind and polite. This is where the school has taught pupils how to follow the rules, and it shows in how they take turns in conversation and answer the teachers' questions.

The personal development programme is well considered. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and live healthy lifestyles. They learn to respect other cultures and faiths. The outdoor curriculum helps pupils learn about managing risks, for example when they are taught about climbing trees or how to create dens.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have a clear vision for the school. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and any areas for improvement. This is enabling the school to take effective action to sustain and develop the quality of education that pupils receive.

Staff are proud to work at this school, knowing how their views are valued. They appreciate the changes leaders made to ensure a manageable workload. There is also a strong focus on training, helping staff to realise their career goals.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and the appropriate authority)

- Some teachers are still getting to grips with teaching a small number of subjects where the curriculum is new, such as mathematics. As a result, pupils do not develop all the knowledge and understanding they need to achieve their best. The school should ensure that teachers have the confidence and subject knowledge to teach subjects well to raise standards further.
- Assessment is still being developed in some wider curriculum subjects. In some subjects, assessment is not used well enough to check that pupils have remembered the knowledge they have been taught. As a result, in some instances, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and do not build their knowledge well enough over time. The school needs to ensure that teachers have the expertise to use assessment effectively across all subjects consistently well.

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 school to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2016.

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	110621
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10378441
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	516
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Hall
Headteacher	Neil Lloyd
Website	www.waterbeach.cambs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 Nov 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up their post in September 2024.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

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 the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and with other school leaders. The inspector also met with governors, including the chair of governors, and spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- 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 range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Duncan Ramsey, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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