

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Wistaston Church Lane Academy

Church Lane, Wistaston, Crewe, Cheshire CW2 8EZ

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 November 2024

Outcome

Wistaston Church Lane Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Cathy Elsley. This school is part The Learning Partnership 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, Dan Thomas, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Wootton.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at Wistaston Church Lane Academy. They enjoy attending school and achieve highly. The school has high expectations for all pupils. Pupils do all that they can to live up to these expectations of their achievement and conduct. They are very clear about how 'ready, respectful and safe' helps the school to be a calm and productive place.

Pupils describe the school as friendly and welcoming. Those who are new to the school quickly settle into the routines and feel part of the school team. Pupils look out for others and think about the impact of their actions. They learn to be respectful citizens. Pupils want the school to be the best that it can be. They work with staff to think of ideas to improve certain aspects and relish the roles of responsibility that they hold.

Pupils benefit from a wealth of opportunities to develop their talents and interests. This ranges from the broad extra-curricular offer, to learning to play musical instruments. The school prioritises pupils' character development. Pupils' resilience, communication and teamwork skills are developed through regular opportunities to learn outdoors and take risks.

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

Pupils learn a curriculum that helps them to build on what they already know. The curriculum design enables pupils to build a secure body of knowledge in each subject. Staff skilfully identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and use this as a starting point for their learning. Pupils benefit from an increasing number of opportunities to recall their previous learning. Where this is effective, pupils know and remember more of their learning over time. In a few subjects, this is less well embedded and pupils, at time, find it hard to remember enough of their learning.

The school makes sure that reading is high profile. Teachers have excellent knowledge of the school's chosen approach to teaching reading. Pupils learn to read well. One pupil said that 'books light up your imagination'. Pupils read widely and often. Staff quickly spot those pupils who need extra help. These pupils get the help that they need to catch up quickly and become confident and fluent readers.

The school equips all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to be able to learn the full curriculum. Pupils' needs are identified precisely, and they receive the support that they need to learn well. There is no ceiling placed on what pupils can achieve. Staff find ways to engage pupils and help them to develop into curious and inquisitive learners. This begins in the early years. Children are aware of the school's high expectations of them right from the start. As a result, they show sustained engagement in their learning activities. In addition, children are well supported by adults who have a secure understanding of how young children learn.

Pupils are kind and courteous. Without a second thought they hold doors open and offer to help. Playground leaders quickly spot anyone who is alone at playtime and engage them in an activity. Pupils know about the different types of bullying but struggled to remember a time when it happened in school. They know that bullying can happen online and they have a range of strategies to get help if they need it.

Pupils attend well. The school keeps a close eye on pupils' attendance and supports parents and carers where action is needed for improvement. The school knows pupils and their families well. They use this knowledge to provide bespoke support to families to have a positive impact on attendance and punctuality.

Pupils leave the school with the depth of understanding that they need about how different people live. They think that it is important to respect everyone. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils have an impressive understanding of how the fundamental British values align with the school values to make the school environment a safe and nurturing place to learn.

Staff are very happy to work at the school. They appreciate the care and consideration that the school shows for their well-being. Staff feel able to approach leaders with any concerns and feel that these are taken seriously. Staff are confident that the decisions made about improving the school are made with children's best interests at heart.

The trust provides effective support and guidance for school leaders. They provide professional development for staff that enables them to carry out their roles to a high standard.

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's work to help pupils recall their learning in some subjects is not embedded. In these subjects, pupils remember less of their learning over time. The school should embed the systems recently introduced to support pupils to know and remember more.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged school to be good for overall effectiveness on 2 and 3 April 2019.

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	141568
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10348314
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	433
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Wootton
CEO of the trust	Dan Thomas
Principal	Cathy Elsley
Website	www.wclacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 April 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Learning Partnership Academies Trust.
- The headteacher has joined the school since the previous inspection.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- There is a nursery with provision for three-year-olds.
- There is an on-site before- and after-school club that is run by the school.

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 have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the principal, subject leaders and the special educational needs co-ordinator. In addition, the inspector met with the director of primary, the CEO as well as members 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement. The inspector scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum, SEND, safeguarding and behaviour.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments.
- The inspector spoke with staff to gather their views on the school.
- The inspector evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Jane Dennis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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