

Inspection of Westlea Primary School

Winslow Crescent, Westlea Estate, Seaham, County Durham SR7 8JU

Inspection dates: 30 November and 1 December 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this welcoming school. They feel safe. They enjoy their learning and say that staff help them to do their best. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being 'Westlea Warriors', school councillors or playground leaders. Pupils take part in lots of clubs and sporting events. They work and play well together.

Leaders are determined that all pupils will succeed in the next stage of their education. All staff share this vision. They continually improve the curriculum and the support that pupils receive. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) keep up with their peers and play a full part in school life.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Lessons and playtimes are calm and orderly. Pupils feel confident to approach staff if they have any concerns. They report that on the rare occasions that bullying happens, staff are quick to put a stop to it. Staff help pupils to manage their feelings and to avoid conflict. Pupils value the counselling and support they can receive in the Rainbow Room.

Children love attending the Nursery and Reception classes. They enjoy learning a broad curriculum full of exciting activities. Staff know exactly how to help children learn as they play. Parents are full of praise for the support their children receive.

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

Leadership at all levels of the school is exceptional. Governors and senior leaders ensure that all staff receive high-quality training and advice. Staff are extremely knowledgeable and are proud to work at the school. They share an ambition for all pupils to succeed in the next stage of their education. As a result, the provision for pupils is of a high standard and continues to improve.

The curriculum is broad. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their learning in subjects such as Spanish and music. Leaders have carefully sequenced the curriculum throughout the school. Pupils remember their learning over time. Leaders make regular checks on the quality of education and are quick to bring about necessary improvements. For example, they identified gaps in pupils' understanding of historical concepts such as civilisation and democracy. Leaders adjusted the curriculum and are training staff. Their actions are improving teachers' subject knowledge and pupils' understanding.

Leaders take every opportunity to build strong relationships with parents. This helps leaders to identify pupils' needs. Teachers take full account of these needs when they plan learning. They are also quick to identify pupils at risk of falling behind. The support that staff provide in lessons is highly effective. They intervene when necessary, using skilful questioning and encouragement.

Reading is a priority throughout the school. Children in the Nursery class enjoy hearing stories and using new words. They are ready for phonics lessons when they start in Reception class. The school's phonics programme is well structured. Pupils read books that match the sounds and words they know. They enjoy a wide range of texts read by their teachers. Skilled staff support pupils and provide extra phonics sessions for those who need them. Pupils value this help.

Pupils also enjoy learning mathematics. Leaders have ensured that the mathematics curriculum builds pupils' knowledge over time. Teachers introduce new learning carefully by checking and referencing what pupils already know. Pupils apply their learning to a range of mathematical problems. Many pupils want to be mathematicians or scientists when they grow up.

Leaders and governors are determined to remove any barriers to pupils' success. Their work with families ensures that almost all pupils attend school regularly and often. Leaders have established effective behaviour systems. In lessons, pupils learn how to look after their mental health and how to manage their behaviour. As a result, pupils behave well and work hard in lessons.

Leaders ensure that pupils have lots of opportunities to develop personal responsibility. The youngest children in early years ask for team meetings to resolve problems. Older pupils take responsibility for computer equipment or the school environment. Leaders ensure that every pupil, especially those with SEND, benefits from opportunities outside the classroom. The school choir performs for parents and in local care homes. Pupils enjoy a wide range of school clubs and sporting opportunities. They learn about world views and cultures. Through these activities, pupils develop a wide range of interests and an understanding of modern society.

Children make an excellent start in early years. Children settle into routines quickly. They are eager to play and learn with others. Leaders have established a curriculum that provides a strong foundation for key stage 1. Staff take every opportunity to help children learn. Children count out pennies to pay for their snacks. They go on 'bear hunts' in the garden. In all activities, the quality of discussion between children, and between children and adults, is exceptionally strong. All children, including those with SEND, become confident learners.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured a culture of safeguarding. They carry out all necessary checks on those who work in school. All staff receive regular safeguarding training. They know the signs that might indicate a concern. Procedures for raising concerns are clear. Leaders work closely with external agencies to support children and their families. Governors take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. They maintain strong oversight of safeguarding matters.

Pupils feel safe in school. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and when they are outside school. Many pupils can give examples of how their learning has enabled them to change their online activity and make positive decisions about safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In history, leaders have identified that pupils' understanding of some concepts, such as civilisation and democracy, is not as developed as the rest of their knowledge. This is because until recently these themes have not had sufficient emphasis in teachers' planning. Leaders should continue to implement their plan of training and support for staff in these aspects of history.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	113998
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10242128
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anne Clarke
Headteacher	Debbie Hughes
Website	www.westleaprimaryschool.com/
Date of previous inspection	12 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school operates a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also held conversations with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about provision for pupils with SEND and considered relevant documentation and practice.

- Inspectors spoke with teaching and support staff and considered responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with pupils throughout the inspection, both formally and informally, during breaktimes and in lessons.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history and science. Here, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, listened to pupils read, talked with pupils and looked at pupils’ work. Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their learning in other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the content of governing body minutes and other documentation, including reports from local authority officers.
- To evaluate the school’s management of safeguarding, inspectors considered a range of relevant school policies and examined the single central record and the school’s procedure for the safer recruitment of staff. Inspectors spoke with staff, governors and pupils to check their views on safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, including any free-text responses, and spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors considered pupils’ behaviour in and outside lessons. Inspectors also considered school behaviour records and spoke with pupils about behaviour.

Inspection team

Ian Dawson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Suzanne Connolly	Ofsted Inspector
John Downs	Ofsted Inspector

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