

Inspection of Westfield Primary School

Durrants Lane, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire HP4 3PJ

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are positive about the changes leaders are making at this school. They are enjoying getting to know new staff. Children in early years make a successful start to school life. Pupils are keen to talk about their favourite lessons and the books they have read. They know that adults want to help them succeed. However, pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do need more specific help to achieve fully what they are capable of.

Pupils like the fact that playtimes are now organised into play zones and quiet areas. They know that this has helped to improve behaviour. However, pupils are concerned that some pupils can still be unkind. Pupils know that adults do address this, yet there remain instances where unwelcome behaviours continue.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to broaden their horizons, such as residential trips and visits linked to the curriculum. Pupils enjoy singing together. Pupils are excited to sing at a national arena and a cathedral. Older pupils learn to play an instrument. Pupils can become kindness ambassadors or librarians or be elected to the school council. There is a variety of clubs, such as choir, football, rock band and art. Year groups take it in turns to participate in sports events and forest school sessions.

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

The school has been through a turbulent period. New leaders have swiftly and accurately identified key areas for school improvement. They have successfully started to address these priorities. Staff feel well supported in their roles. Governors know the school well. They make regular checks on safeguarding and fulfil their statutory duties. Governors access external quality assurance in order to strengthen their oversight of the school.

The school has revised the curriculums for reading, writing and mathematics. Staff are now clear about the key knowledge that pupils need to learn and when. These curriculums are suitably ambitious. Subject leaders are knowledgeable. They have provided effective support to staff on how to deliver curriculum content. There are early signs of improvement in how pupils are achieving in these subjects.

Leaders have rightly prioritised reading. Staff are now more confident in teaching phonics. This means that younger pupils are getting better at securely recalling the sounds that letters represent and reading words. Children in early years are immersed in stories to develop their vocabulary. Pupils practise the sounds they know. Pupils of all ages read often. However, for some pupils who find reading tricky, gaps in their knowledge are still not being addressed quickly enough.

Pupils are taught all curriculum subjects. However, there are currently some foundation subjects that do not lay out clearly enough the detailed knowledge to be taught or what prior learning pupils need to have. Leaders are addressing this.

The school has improved the systems to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. There are currently more pupils with needs recognised than was previously the case. Staff regularly review how these pupils are achieving their targets. The school seeks out and secures additional funding and resources for these pupils. They learn in class with extra adult support. However, the work set for pupils with SEND is not adapted precisely enough to match their needs. Therefore, some pupils with SEND are not achieving as well as they could.

Staff address misconceptions in lessons. However, there are insufficient systematic checks on what knowledge pupils have secured. This means that gaps in learning are not picked up or filled quickly enough. Sometimes, the work set for pupils does not build on what pupils can do already. This limits how well pupils achieve across the curriculum.

In early years, the curriculum is well designed, and children's knowledge builds clearly over time. Adults use considered questions and engaging activities to extend children's language skills successfully. They skilfully spot and fill learning gaps. Children learn to share and take turns. They are well prepared for Year 1.

The school has recently strengthened provision to support pupils with more challenging behaviours. Consequently, incidents of poor behaviour are reducing. However, some pupils are still not following the school rules. Staff take swift and appropriate action when they are aware of pupils' concerns. However, some pupils do not always report their worries to staff. There are still instances of low-level disruption in some classes. A new behaviour policy has just been finalised, which aims to tackle this.

Pupils are taught about healthy relationships and healthy lifestyles. They understand about respecting different faiths and beliefs and key British values, such as democracy. They know how to stay safe when online. Staff diligently follow up any patterns of absence and put personalised help in place for pupils who need it. Overall, most pupils attend school regularly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Checks on what pupils have learned and can recall are not robust enough. Staff are not precisely aware of the exact gaps that pupils have in order to best tailor support or set work that is well matched to pupils' ability. This means that some pupils have gaps in learning that remain or complete work that they are already capable of doing. The school needs to ensure that there are rigorous checks in

place to ensure that new learning is built on secure foundations, and work is well matched to extend knowledge for all pupils.

- Pupils with SEND do not have activities precisely adapted for their needs. This limits how successfully they can achieve confidently and independently. Staff need to set work that is well adapted and have high expectations for pupils with SEND. The school needs to provide additional support to staff so that they know how best to do this.
- There remain incidents of unwelcome behaviours and low-level disruption. This means that pupils cannot fully concentrate on learning or feel unsettled. The school needs to ensure that staff understand how to apply the new behaviour policy and strategies consistently so that pupils behave consistently well.

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	117254
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10267856
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	182
Appropriate authority	Board of governors
Chair of governing body	Ash Patil
Headteacher	Emma Leach
Website	www.westfieldprimary.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 and 3 March 2010, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up post in September 2023.
- The school had two interim headteachers in the academic year 2022/23.
- At its last inspection in March 2010, the school was a first school for pupils aged three to nine years.
- The school has a Nursery class. However, there are no Nursery children on roll at present. Nursery provision is due to restart in September 2024.
- There have been several new staff start at the school since Easter 2023.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider of education.

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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the key stage 2 leader, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, computing and music. For each deep dive, the inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with teachers and support staff. The lead inspector also listened to pupils reading aloud to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors met the subject leader for personal, social and health education.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the local authority school improvement adviser. The inspectors read recent notes of visits to the school from local authority advisers.
- The lead inspector met the chair of the governing board. The lead inspector also met two other governors, including a parent governor.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan and minutes of governing board meetings.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses gathered through Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, which included 62 free-text comments. An inspector spoke to parents at the school gate. The lead inspector also noted the views of parents that had been sent by email to the inspection team.
- There were no responses to the staff survey. No pupils responded to the pupil survey. However, the inspectors spoke to pupils from different year groups during the inspection, as well as a range of staff. Meetings with staff and pupils took place without leaders present.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Emma Breckenridge

Ofsted Inspector

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