

Inspection of Woodchurch Road Primary School

Woodchurch Road, Oxton, Birkenhead, Merseyside CH42 9LJ

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 April 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are well cared for at Woodchurch Road Primary. Staff want the best for their pupils. Pupils enjoy school and work hard. They said that you can achieve what you want as long as you work hard. Despite this, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because they do not routinely benefit from a well-designed or purposeful curriculum.

Pupils feel safe in school. They told inspectors that staff are always there to listen. Pupils get along well together. They understand the importance of respecting everyone, regardless of background. Pupils are confident that staff will deal with any incidents of bullying. They respond well to staff's expectations and behave well.

Pupils have many opportunities to attend wider curriculum activities. They enjoy after-school clubs, such as those for cooking, golf and choir. Visits beyond the classroom, including residential trips, broaden their social skills and extend their knowledge.

Children make a strong start to their education in early years. Leaders have high expectations for the children, whatever their starting point. Adults immerse children in purposeful activities that encourage independence and interest. This means that children are keen to participate.

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

The school has been through an unsettled period in recent times. The new leadership team is taking effective action to overcome the weaknesses that have emerged during this time. In particular, leaders are forging ahead with their curriculum thinking. They have decided on the overall content that they want pupils to learn in each subject. In some areas of the curriculum, leaders have developed this thinking further by identifying the key knowledge that pupils will learn and the order in which it should be taught. This enables pupils to build on what they already know. As a result, pupils learn well in these subjects.

In other subjects, leaders are still in the early stages of making sure that teachers know what pupils should learn. This prevents teachers from designing activities that help pupils to know and remember more.

Teachers have had insufficient training to help them deliver the new curriculums effectively. This means that pupils' learning across subjects and classes is uneven. In some subjects, such as mathematics, teachers are using assessment strategies well. This means that they can plan lessons that build on pupils' prior knowledge. This is not yet consistent in all subject areas.

The curriculum for children in the Reception class is stronger than in the rest of the school. There is a strong focus on developing children's communication skills, including their vocabulary. Staff know what children need to know by the time they

move into Year 1. They check children's learning carefully so that children gain the knowledge that they need in order to be successful in their next stage in their learning.

Leaders have made reading a priority. Staff are well trained and supported. Children get off to a flying start with their daily phonics sessions in the Reception class. Teachers make sure that pupils learn new sounds in a carefully ordered way. They check how well pupils are learning in order to identify those who may need extra support. The books that pupils read match the sounds they are being taught. All staff promote a love of reading throughout school. Older pupils talked enthusiastically about books and authors. They told inspectors about their 'drop everything and read' sessions, which they love.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in a timely manner. They work with many agencies to ensure that these pupils are supported well. Staff know how to adapt their teaching so that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as other pupils in the school.

Children in the Reception class settle quickly because relationships with staff are strong. Pupils across Year 1 to Year 6 enjoy playing together. Most pupils behave well. Attendance is a focus for the school. Leaders are taking effective action to improve pupils' behaviour. As a result, persistent absence is starting to decrease.

Pupils' personal development is promoted well. Leaders have prioritised provision to support pupils' mental health following the pandemic. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The curriculum helps pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. Pupils could also talk confidently about different families and relationships.

Governors are fully supportive of the school, but they do not provide enough direction or challenge to leaders to secure improvements to the quality of education that pupils receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. All staff are well trained and know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Leaders keep safeguarding a high priority by providing regular updates. Staff act in a timely way to get the help that families need, when they need it. They work well with all external agencies.

The curriculum enables pupils to learn how to stay safe. This includes online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders are in the earliest stages of designing a curriculum that enables pupils to achieve well. These curriculums do not identify what pupils should know and when this knowledge should be taught. As a result, pupils cannot build on what they know and their learning is uneven. Leaders should ensure that all subject curriculums provide sufficient guidance for teachers to help them build pupils' learning over time.
- Governors provide leaders with insufficient challenge. They do not hold leaders to account for the quality of education that pupils receive. As a result, pupils' achievement is not good enough. Governors must ensure that they have a more informed view of the school's effectiveness so that they can provide greater support and challenge to school leaders.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	105047
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10226192
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	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing	Frank Doyle
Headteacher	Juliet Birch
Website	www.woodchurchroad.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 and 11 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection, there was an acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher and acting assistant headteacher in post. The substantive headteacher left the school in December 2021.
- The school makes use of one alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. An inspector also spoke with three representatives of the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history, art and design, and physical education. This involved visiting lessons with subject leaders, discussing the subject curriculums, talking to pupils and teachers, and looking at pupils' work. An inspector also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes, lunchtime and during lessons. Pupils also talked to the inspectors about their views of their school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and spoke to parents and carers at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors checked leaders' safeguarding procedures. This involved viewing a range of safeguarding documentation and looking at how incidents are managed and recorded.

Inspection team

Bev Dolman, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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