

Inspection of an outstanding school: Waltham St Lawrence Primary School

School Road, Waltham St Lawrence, Reading, Berkshire RG10 0NU

Inspection date:

21 February 2023

Outcome

Waltham St Lawrence Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are highly motivated to learn. They embrace the extensive range of experiences on offer at school. Pupils feel completely safe. They respect and trust the adults who look after them. Adults offer high levels of care and emotional support so that all pupils can achieve highly. Relationships at all levels are incredibly strong. Staff and pupils work together exceptionally well to live out the school's vision 'together we inspire and achieve'.

Pupils display a real joy for and love of learning. Excellent attitudes to learning and exemplary behaviour enable even the youngest children to reach the very high expectations set by their teachers. All pupils are challenged to develop independence and see learning as an adventure. Problem-solving is strongly encouraged. As one pupil commented, 'Sometimes you learn more when you get something wrong.'

There is little or no bullying in the school. However, leaders have good procedures in place should it happen, and pupils are confident that if it did, it would be dealt with swiftly. Parents really value the school's approach to pupils' wider development and learning. They appreciate the opportunities offered to their children. 'As a school, they go above and beyond for each and every child, each and every day,' is reflective of many positive comments made by parents.

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

Leaders have developed an inspirational, highly ambitious and unique curriculum. They have identified the essential knowledge that all pupils must learn. This builds in a sensible sequence right from the start of Reception to the end of Year 6. The curriculum is securely embedded across all subjects. It meets the individual needs of all learners. As a result, all pupils achieve highly. There is no low-level disruption during lessons, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of learning.

Leaders strive to achieve the very best for all pupils. Children in Reception get off to a strong start. Highly effective routines ensure that children settle quickly developing

confidence and resilience. Learning is exceptionally well organised so that pupils can make links across subjects. For example, the school's Mandarin curriculum not only teaches pupils to speak Mandarin but also enriches learning in other subjects through high-quality cross-curricular links. Leaders have high expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Plans to support these pupils are comprehensive. Leaders and staff work hard to make sure that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified and met consistently well. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve highly.

Leaders prioritise reading. Children learn how to read right from the start of Reception. Teachers make sure that all children have the necessary knowledge and skills to help them learn to read with confidence. Highly skilled staff teach the school's phonics programme effectively. Pupils have regular opportunities to practise their sounds. This allows them to build up their skills and become confident readers. Teachers take swift action if pupils are falling behind to make sure they catch up quickly. Older pupils read regularly. They focus on fluency and developing their comprehension. The way pupils talk about books shows they clearly love reading.

The mathematics curriculum is well designed and taught effectively. Young children have a rich introduction to number enabling them to count. Teachers ensure that children have many practical opportunities to develop their understanding. All pupils routinely apply their mathematical skills when solving problems. They can use correct mathematical language when explaining and justifying their answers.

School staff at all levels feel very well supported by leaders and are encouraged to do their best. Leaders take staff welfare seriously and have introduced a number of changes to help staff manage workload more effectively.

Leaders are rightly proud of the emphasis their high-quality curriculum places on pupils' wider development. The provision is exceptional. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities they have to support the school, such as being a peer mediator or sports leader. Pupils' attitudes are infectious. They truly reflect school values such as love, peace and community. Pupils are tolerant, inclusive and accepting. They fully embrace all opportunities to learn. Pupils experience dance festivals, visits to theatres, writing competitions and residential trips. These are highly valued and enjoyed by all. Furthermore, pupils particularly like learning in the 'Forest Fun Club.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. Safeguarding is recognised as everybody's responsibility. Staff are well trained and are confident about what action to take if they have a concern about a pupil. They are clear on reporting procedures. Concerns are recorded in detail, and all actions taken are followed up rigorously. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get swift help if they need it.

Pupils feel exceptionally safe. Regular lessons on how to stay safe empower pupils when working online. Children are proud that they can cross the road safely.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 the school to be outstanding in February 2017.

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	109832
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	10242487
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	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Fiona Edwards
Headteacher	Li-Juan Ellerton
Website	www.wslprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	2 and 3 February 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-size school
- All junior pupils learn in mixed-age classes.
- The school manages its own before-school provision. After-school provision is managed by an external provider.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school staff.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspector met with representatives of the local education authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders,

looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff, pupils and governors. Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding lead to review the provision for safeguarding and review records and actions. Inspectors also looked at safeguarding records and reviewed information about the safer recruitment of staff.
- Inspector spoke to staff and groups of pupils from different year groups. They observed behaviour in classrooms and at lunchtime.
- The view of staff and pupils, including responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys, were taken into account.
- The responses to Ofsted Parent View, including written responses, were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Bill James, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Clare Vallence

Ofsted Inspector

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