

# Inspection of a good school: Westdale Junior School

Westdale Lane, Mapperley, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG3 6ET

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Inspection dates:

3 and 4 November 2021

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say that the school community is warm and welcoming. They like the extra-curricular activities and the 'enrichment Wednesdays'. They learn how to be good citizens, for example, through the school's links with local community organisations. On the whole, pupils behave well but some are concerned about the behaviour of others, especially on the playground. They understand how to raise any concerns, including about bullying.

Pupils are not getting a consistently good deal in all subjects. Leaders are not doing enough to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), get the support they need to achieve their best across the curriculum.

Many parents and carers commented on the positive changes in the school. A typical comment described Westdale as a 'lovely school where kindness is important'. However, some parents feel that leaders do not communicate with them as well as they could.

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

Leaders want all pupils to benefit from an ambitious curriculum and a rich set of experiences. Their plans to put this vision into practice are not consistently well developed across all subjects.

Pupils' learning in mathematics is based on well-sequenced and coherent plans. Teachers use appropriate resources to support those who need extra help. Pupils speak confidently about their knowledge and skills in this subject.

Other areas of the curriculum are less well developed. This is particularly the case in reading. In upper key stage 2, high-quality texts develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of key topics and themes, such as the roots of prejudice. Pupils who need

it get support to develop their reading skills. In lower key stage 2, teachers' expectations are too low. Reading texts are not always well chosen to meet pupils' needs and engage their interests. Pupils in these classes find it hard to engage with characters and settings in the texts they read. Pupils across different classes do not have enough opportunities to explore different genres, like poetry and drama.

Pupils enjoy developing their writing skills. Teachers encourage them to pay close attention to grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils understand how to write different types of text, such as letters, newspaper articles and creative writing. They show pride in their work, taking care to edit and improve it.

In modern foreign languages, subject experts use engaging activities to capture pupils' interest and their appreciation of language and culture. For example, the weekly Spanish club offers the opportunity for pupils to develop their speaking skills, while the school choir learns to sing songs in Spanish. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and build on what they have learned. They struggle to remember their previous learning. In other subjects, teachers have identified the key knowledge they want pupils to learn but do not plan activities to build pupils' understanding well enough.

Pupils are encouraged to respect others. They are courteous to visitors. Pupils are encouraged to demonstrate the school values of kindness and respect, for example, by participating in charitable and fundraising events, like Children in Need. The assembly programme provides useful opportunities for pupils to understand the principles of equality and diversity and to develop respect and tolerance.

Some pupils are worried that the behaviour of others in class prevents them from learning as well as they could. They say that some pupils do not behave well on the playground. A number of parents expressed concerns that behaviour in school is not always positive or well managed. Leaders do not record incidents of poor behaviour well enough to spot the patterns and tackle the causes.

Leaders ensure that individual learning plans for pupils with SEND take account of pupils' and their parents' views and wishes. However, the targets for pupils with SEND are sometimes too vague. Therefore, plans do not help teachers know how to support the pupils as well as they could.

Staff appreciate the efforts that leaders make to manage their workload and well-being. In recent years, this has included reducing the amount of marking they are expected to do.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that the teaching of reading may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and governors are provided with appropriate training which ensures that they understand how to respond to and manage any concerns. Most recently, training has included a specific focus on mental health and well-being. Leaders understand the importance of carefully tracking the progress of any actions they take to keep pupils safe. Pupils with medical needs are supported effectively.

Appropriate pre-employment checks are completed to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have not ensured that reading texts are suitable and appropriately challenging. Pupils in lower key stage 2 do not develop sufficient knowledge of different types of text and do not engage well with the texts they read. Leaders should ensure that pupils are provided with ambitious reading texts, carefully chosen to promote pupils' knowledge and skills as well as their love of reading.
- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum in all subjects is well planned and implemented. The work that is set for pupils is sometimes not demanding enough. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to recall their previous learning. Leaders should work with subject coordinators to ensure that the implementation of the curriculum in all subjects provides pupils with appropriate opportunities to retain key knowledge and concepts and develop their understanding.
- Leaders have not ensured that all pupils behave as well as they should. The systems for identifying and managing disruptive and challenging behaviours are not well developed. Leaders should work with staff to ensure that pupils' behaviour is consistently well managed. They should ensure all staff and pupils are clear about how rewards and sanctions should be used to support good behaviour.
- Targets for pupils with SEND are not as sharp as they need to be. This means that these pupils are not as well supported as they should be. Leaders should review pupils' learning plans to ensure that they consistently support pupils to know and remember more of the curriculum.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Westdale Junior School, to be good in November 2016.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144431
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire County Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199683
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	238
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Richard Flewitt
<b>Head of school</b>	Robert Slater
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.westdalejuniors.co.uk">www.westdalejuniors.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in 2016.
- The school is a member of the Nova Education Trust. The headteacher also works closely with an executive headteacher.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other curriculum leaders. The inspector held a meeting with the chair of the local governing board and a representative of the multi-academy trust.
- The inspector did deep dives in reading, English, mathematics and modern languages. This involved speaking with leaders, staff and pupils, visiting lessons and reviewing curriculum plans and samples of pupils' work. The inspector also considered the quality of the curriculum in a further range of subjects, and the school's wider enrichment curriculum.

- The inspector evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks and other documents relating to safeguarding. The inspector met with the designated senior leader for safeguarding to discuss the school's policies and procedures. The inspector also spoke with pupils and staff to evaluate the school's safeguarding culture.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in class and around school.
- The inspector spoke with staff about workload and well-being.

### **Inspection team**

Emma Hollis-Brown, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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