

Inspection of a good school: Lowton West Primary School

Slag Lane, Lowton, Warrington, Cheshire WA3 2ED

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 November 2022

Outcome

Lowton West Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this welcoming and friendly school. They appreciate how much their teachers look after them. Pupils said that they feel safe and that at Lowton West, everyone cares for everyone else.

Pupils behave sensibly in lessons and around school. They meet the clear expectations that leaders set for their behaviour. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They listen carefully to staff and one another. Leaders deal with the very rare incidents of bullying effectively.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. Pupils work hard to fulfil leaders' high expectations for their learning. Pupils help each other to succeed in their work. Pupils benefit from leaders' determination that differences are celebrated and acceptance and respect are promoted fully.

Pupils' education is enhanced well through a range of different experiences organised by leaders. Visitors to school, and pupils' visits to places of interest, enliven pupils' learning. For example, pupils thoroughly enjoyed meeting a recent visitor who portrayed Florence Nightingale.

Pupils are keen to make a difference to their school community. They willingly take on many different leadership roles. Pupils appreciate sharing their views with leaders and staff to help improve their school further.

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

Leaders have carefully designed an ambitious curriculum that starts in the early years. In the Reception class, children gain key knowledge and vocabulary so that they are well prepared for the key stage 1 curriculum.

Subject leaders have decided on the key knowledge and vocabulary that all pupils should

learn and when this will be taught. This helps teachers to build pupils' knowledge across a range of subjects. Pupils achieve well over time. They leave Lowton West Primary with the knowledge and personal attributes that they need to successfully continue their learning at secondary school.

Leaders ensure that teachers have the subject knowledge necessary to deliver the curriculum effectively. Most of the time, teachers present new learning carefully. They select appropriate learning activities to aid pupils' learning. However, staff sometimes teach new information without giving pupils enough chance to practise and refine their understanding. This means that pupils' knowledge of some key concepts is not as secure as it could be.

Leaders have made sure that the curriculum has been adapted to address gaps in pupils' knowledge that are due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mostly, teachers carefully check pupils' understanding of subject curriculums and adapt their teaching to overcome misconceptions.

Leaders prioritise reading. They make sure that phonics teaching begins right away in the Reception Year. Well-trained staff deliver the phonics programme effectively so that pupils become fluent readers. Staff provide pupils with reading books that are matched to their phonics knowledge. This builds pupils' enthusiasm for reading and fosters their confidence. Pupils who fall behind in reading catch up quickly because of the helpful support that they receive from teaching staff. Pupils throughout the school said that they enjoy the quality and range of books teachers read at their regular story times.

Teachers identify the needs of pupils with SEND effectively. They make sure that these pupils follow the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Teachers provide pupils with SEND with valuable opportunities to apply their learning in different ways. This helps pupils to know and remember more. Pupils with SEND achieve well. They participate fully in school life.

Pupils' relationships are harmonious and respectful. This means that pupils' learning is rarely interrupted by low-level disruption. Pupils work with resilience, determination and consistency.

Leaders ensure that pupils have many opportunities to develop their understanding of the wider world. Staff teach pupils to respect differences between people of diverse families, communities and religions. Pupils profit from well-considered residential trips and external visits. Staff teach pupils to value charitable fundraising through links with a range of local charities. Pupils take part in a wide range of artistic, cultural and sporting events in and beyond the school day.

Governors hold a convincing knowledge of the school's work. They carry out their duties effectively. Governors use their knowledge to challenge and support the work of the leadership team in equal measure. Leaders of the school have a well-informed and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Staff, including early career teachers, appreciate the thoughtful ways that leaders consider their workload and welfare.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know pupils well. This allows them to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders act quickly to secure the necessary support that pupils need, including working with outside agencies if required.

Leaders ensure that all staff complete regular, high-quality training on safeguarding. Staff are well informed about the potential risks to pupils' safety and welfare.

Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe in their day-to-day lives. This includes online safety and an awareness of cyberbullying. Pupils also learn about healthy relationships at an age-appropriate level.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not help pupils well enough to practise what they have learned. This means that their new learning is not as secure as it should be. Leaders should ensure that staff give pupils greater opportunities to embed what they are taught before they move on to new concepts.

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 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2013.

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	106428
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10241884
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	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dr Gena Merrett
Headteacher	Jeanette Westhead
Website	www.lowtonwest.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- School leaders do not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the safeguarding team, the inclusion team, the attendance leader, teachers, curriculum leaders and a group of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into early reading and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- The inspector heard pupils read to a known member of staff.
- The inspector reviewed curriculum documentation and other information published on

the school's website. The inspector met with the team responsible for pupils' personal development.

- The inspector scrutinised leaders' records for attendance and behaviour.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and the safeguarding team to consider how well the school identifies pupils who are at risk and engages with external services. The inspector also met with a range of pupils and staff to ask about safeguarding.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The inspector also considered responses to the staff survey and responses to the Ofsted survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Mike Tonge, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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