

Inspection of a good school: Wheatley Lane Methodist Voluntary Aided Primary School

Fence, Burnley, Lancashire BB12 9ED

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 March 2023

Outcome

Wheatley Lane Methodist Voluntary Aided Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years, value being part of this compassionate school community. They forge strong relationships with staff and their peers. This makes pupils happy to come to school.

Pupils know that leaders have high expectations for their behaviour. They meet these expectations by treating others with respect and kindness. Bullying is taken seriously by leaders and dealt with quickly. Leaders' actions, along with the support from the well-being ambassadors, help pupils to feel safe.

Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are eager to learn and engage well in lessons. Pupils achieve well across most subjects.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities beyond the classroom. The pupil rotary club organises fundraising events for the charities that they have chosen to support. This encourages pupils to become empathetic to others less fortunate than themselves. Pupils also take part in an end-of-year theatre production and choir performance. This builds pupils' confidence and communication skills. Pupils are supported with their physical health and mental well-being. They regularly take part in sports clubs and competitions.

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

Leaders have designed a rich and ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including pupils with SEND. Subject leaders in most curriculum areas have carefully considered the key knowledge that pupils must learn and the order in which this should be taught. However, in a few subjects, leaders have not clearly defined the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn. As a result, in these subjects, teachers are not clear what pupils should

know and remember over time. This prevents pupils gaining the key knowledge that they need to know.

Teachers benefit from a range of training opportunities that mean they deliver the curriculum well. Their strong subject knowledge enables them to extend pupils' vocabulary effectively. Teachers model the language that pupils should use and explain new learning clearly. In the early years, leaders set up a variety of stimulating learning environments. This fosters children's curiosity of the world around them. Leaders also provide purposeful activities which promote children's writing and language development. This facilitates children to interact with their peers and builds their confidence.

At times, some teachers do not follow the curriculum design carefully enough. This means that pupils do not learn the subject content that they should. As a result, pupils' learning is less secure in some subjects. Leaders are not aware of when this happens because they do not have sufficient oversight of how the curriculum is taught.

Leaders have a relentless focus on reading. Pupils have dedicated time to read for pleasure daily from the time that they start in the Reception class through to Year 6. Teachers choose books carefully to build pupils' understanding of the differences between people in society. They also expose pupils to a range of texts and authors that hold pupils' interests. Reading ambassadors relish the opportunity to read to children in the early years. Pupils gain a love of reading. They read frequently.

There is a carefully designed phonics programme that is delivered well across the early years and key stage 1. Teachers are well trained to effectively build pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds over time. Teachers routinely revisit prior learning to ensure that pupils do not forget what they have been taught. Teachers quickly identify, and then support, pupils who do not keep pace with the phonics programme. Teachers carefully choose books that match to the sounds that pupils are learning. As a result, pupils become fluent readers.

Leaders use effective systems to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. They seek additional support from specialist services when needed. Teachers are well informed of the needs of pupils with SEND. They use this information to adapt their delivery of the curriculum well. This allows pupils with SEND to access the same learning opportunities as their peers.

Leaders ensure that disruption to learning is rare. Pupils have a positive attitude to learning and they attend school regularly. Pupils work hard and stay focused in lessons. Children in the early years follow routines well. As a result, classrooms are calm and orderly. This helps pupils concentrate on their work and make the most of their time in school.

Leaders' work to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain is effective. Pupils attend events with other schools where they can collaborate with pupils from different backgrounds. They develop an appreciation of different cultures and faiths through these interactions. Pupils explore local and world news regularly. They also enjoy visits to museums, rivers

and outdoor activity centres. Such experiences extend pupils' understanding of life beyond the classroom.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They forge strong relationships with pupils and staff. Governors provide challenge and hold leaders to account for the work that they do. They also play a key role in supporting leaders to manage staff's workload and well-being. Staff feel valued as a result.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. They use robust systems to identify and respond to the needs of pupils and their families. Staff are trained well to identify any signs of potential harm that pupils may be experiencing. Concerns are raised quickly and sensitively by staff.

Leaders ensure that pupils and their families receive high levels of support. External agencies and charities are utilised when needed. Leaders record their actions to keep pupils safe clearly, and in a timely manner.

Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and how to recognise the signs of unhealthy relationships. Pupils have a good awareness of when and how to report concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not made clear the essential knowledge that pupils should know and remember. As a result, pupils are unable to build on their knowledge effectively in some of these subjects. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum identifies the content that pupils need to learn.
- In a few subjects, leaders are not checking how well the curriculum is being delivered and whether the pupils are retaining their knowledge securely over time. This means some weaknesses in the curriculum are not addressed quickly enough. Leaders should make sure that they have a stronger oversight of curriculum implementation so that pupils learn all that is intended.

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 March 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	119702
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10256206
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Stickland
Headteacher	Tracy Hallows
Website	www.wheatleylane.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary-aided Methodist primary school. The last section 48 inspection took place in December 2021.
- The school is part of the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust.
- Leaders do not make use of any 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 this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and members of staff. She also spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors and a representative of the local authority and diocese.
- The inspector analysed safeguarding documentation, including the single central record. The inspector spoke with a range of pupils, staff and leaders to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in the school.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. She talked with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at examples of children's and pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with children and pupils. The inspector also observed some pupils reading to trusted staff.
- The inspector observed children's and pupils' behaviour in class and as they moved around school. She also observed pupils playing at lunchtime.
- The inspector spoke with groups of children and pupils about their experiences of school.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. She also met with parents and carers before school to find out their views of the school.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Amina Modan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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