Inspection of Warden Hill Infant School

Birdsfoot Lane, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 2DN

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2024

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	**Requires improvement**
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to Warden Hill Infant School. They are friendly, with lovely manners. Pupils thrive on the praise they get for behaving well and for showing the monthly values they learn about, such as empathy and integrity.

The school is highly inclusive. Pupils have a strong appreciation of diversity and equality. The many different ethnicities represented in the school community enrich school life. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported.

There is a wide range of extra-curricular clubs for pupils to choose from. While many of these are sporting clubs, pupils also enjoy playing cards, using construction toys, singing with the choir, or learning to play the ukelele at lunchtime or after school. Some pupils get involved in the running of the school by being school councillors. These opportunities help pupils' wider development.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They appreciate the way their teachers make lessons fun, through practical activities or outdoor learning. In some subjects, such as reading, pupils' achievement is improving. This is not the case for all subjects. Adults' expectations of what pupils can do are not always high enough. This, along with some weaknesses in the curriculum, means that pupils do not always learn as well as they should.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop a well-sequenced, coherently planned curriculum. This work has been more fruitful in some subjects than in others. In the well-developed areas of the curriculum, pupils build a body of knowledge and skills. They talk confidently about past learning, and how this helps them understand new ideas. In mathematics, for example, pupils use times tables knowledge when halving numbers. In these subjects, teachers present new learning clearly. They use a range of checks to ensure that pupils are learning well, dealing with misconceptions and adjusting their teaching as needed.

In other subjects, the school has reviewed the curriculum, but it has not done so with enough rigour. There is a lack of clarity around what the school wants pupils to know and how pupils will learn it. In these areas, including in early years, teachers' delivery of the curriculum is less effective. They do not check how well pupils are learning. In addition, staff expectations of pupils' work are not high enough. The quality of pupils' work can be poor. This makes it harder for pupils to build on their learning.

Reading is a strength of the school. In early years, a book-based curriculum promotes a love of stories from the moment children join the Reception Year. Every day, teachers read to pupils. Consequently, pupils experience a range of books by different authors. Phonics lessons are delivered by well-trained adults, with great

consistency. Any pupils who struggle with reading get precisely targeted support so that they catch up. As a result, pupils' achievements in reading are improving rapidly.

In the early years, stimulating environments support children's play well. Children get along well with each other and develop strong relationships with the adults. The school's ambition is for children to become creative learners who are ready for Year 1 by the end of Reception. However, too many children are not ready for Year 1. This is because the curriculum needs further improvement for high-quality learning to take place.

Most pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers, with the help of adapted tasks or practical resources. Some pupils with SEND have complex needs. They are supported well by caring, skilled adults. Many have an individualised programme of learning.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct. Adults model positive behaviours to pupils. Consequently, pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. The school has taken effective action to promote positive attendance and punctuality. This has led to significant improvements. More pupils now attend school more often.

Pupils know about important topics such as online safety and how to have a healthy lifestyle. Pupils can talk about a range of world religions. Pupils' understanding of British values such as the rule of law and tolerance is well developed. A programme of wider opportunities, including a trip to the pantomime, inter-school football matches and a whole school 'Culture day', enriches school life.

Governors have a realistic view of the school's strengths and areas to develop. A recent increase in the number of governors has enabled them to strengthen the support and challenge they provide to leaders. Leaders have worked hard to bring about change since the last inspection. They recognise that there is more work to do. Many staff feel well supported by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some curriculum areas, including in the early years, pupils are not learning as well as they should. These curriculum areas have not been adjusted and refined as they have in the better parts of the curriculum. Key learning is not always clearly outlined, for instance key vocabulary. This means that staff find it more challenging to pick activities that support learning well. The school must ensure that the same precision and rigour that are present in some areas of the

curriculum, such as mathematics and reading, are mirrored in all areas, so that pupils learn well.

- In those areas of the curriculum that are not as well developed, assessment is not used effectively to check how well pupils are learning. This means that gaps in pupils' learning are not always identified. The school must ensure that the refinements it makes to the curriculum lead to more effective use of assessment. This, in turn, will lead to improved outcomes for pupils.
- Adults' expectations of pupils' work are not always high enough. The quality of work in pupils' books is often poor and does not support pupils in embedding their learning. The school must ensure that staff have consistently high expectations of what pupils can do and that the work pupils produce reflects high-quality learning.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	109570
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10294920
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Trish Pinner
Headteacher	Lisa Maxted
Website	www.wardenhillinfant.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 January 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use the services of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account of their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with a range of leaders, including senior leaders, the special educational needs co-ordinator, and governors, including the chair. The lead inspector met with the school's improvement partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, music and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and spoke with some pupils about their learning. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils'

work. The lead inspector listened to several pupils read to a familiar adult. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work and curriculum plans in other subject areas.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation and policies. These included the school development plan and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's parent and staff questionnaires. They also spoke with pupils, parents and staff to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Lynne Williams	His Majesty's Inspector
Georgina Nutton	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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