

Inspection of a good school: St Michael's Woolmer Green CofE VA Primary School

London Road, Woolmer Green, Hertfordshire SG3 6JP

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 November 2022

Outcome

St Michael's Woolmer Green CofE VA Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Michael's Woolmer Green is a friendly school where pupils are keen to live out the school's vision to 'Shine as lights in the world'. They work hard and have positive attitudes toward learning. Pupils show respect for others and are accepting of difference. New pupils are warmly welcomed into the inclusive school community.

Pupils respond well to staff's high expectations. Low-level disruption is rare, and classrooms are calm and purposeful places of learning. Teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for their learning. Pupils are resilient and know that making mistakes is okay because it helps them learn.

Leaders provide pupils with a wide range of activities to build their character and broaden their experiences. The lunchtime knitting club is particularly popular. Year 6 pupils relish the responsibility of looking after their Reception buddies.

Pupils feel safe at school. They learn how to manage friendships and recognise bullying. They say bullying sometimes happens, but adults deal with it well. Leaders prioritise well-being. They ensure pupils know how to keep themselves healthy in body and mind. As a result, pupils thrive.

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

Curriculum leaders understand their role and have a clear vision for the curriculum. They identify clearly the important subject knowledge they want pupils to learn each year. This is set out from Reception to Year 6.

Leaders are reviewing curriculum planning in all subjects. In those subjects that have been reviewed, plans are clearly sequenced and designed to allow pupils to build their learning over time. In some cases, knowledge is appropriately linked to the local area to make learning more meaningful to pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils learning about the Second World War visited the village church to look at the significance, iconography and

history of the war memorial and a special stained glass window.

Although the curriculum is improved, in some subjects, the changes have only been recent. This means that some pupils forget their learning because they are not building on firm foundations. In some cases, this is because more time is needed for the improved curriculum to be delivered to help pupils deepen their knowledge. In others, it is because the leaders have not yet made the planned changes to the curriculum.

Leaders prioritise reading, and adults promote a love of reading throughout the school. Teachers read to pupils often. They choose high-quality stories and non-fiction books. A new phonics programme was introduced in January, which has ensured that early reading is well taught and pupils learn well. Staff are trained to help all children to make progress, including those who have missed learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic or absence. They intervene quickly when they see a pupil is not keeping up.

Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. They check pupils' learning during lessons, using skilled questioning. They are flexible and adjust their teaching if they notice pupils need more time. Teachers identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. They adapt teaching to ensure these pupils get the help they need to access the same curriculum as others.

Pupils have positive attitudes toward learning. There is very little disruption to lessons from poor behaviour. When this does arise, staff deal with it effectively because they follow the school's agreed approach consistently. Pupils are attentive and listen well. They work hard to complete the tasks given. The playground is a happy place where pupils say they feel safe. They play together across different year groups, often in cooperative games.

Leaders focus strongly on developing pupils' skills and interests beyond the curriculum. Pupils can choose from a wide range of sports, including archery, golf and lacrosse. They enjoy learning to play musical instruments such as the ukulele and glockenspiel. Pupils can learn to cook and knit at extra-curricular clubs.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum and carefully chosen resources help pupils to learn about difference. They learn about democracy through their school council. They enjoy raising money for charities such as 'Hello Yellow' or the bishop's Mozambique appeal.

Senior leaders share an ambitious vision for the school. They are supported by a committed governing body. Governors and leaders know what the school does well and are working together on the things it needs to improve. Leaders are conscious of the impact changes may have on staff. They work hard to ensure staff's workload is manageable and well-being supported. Staff say they feel valued and are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Adults are well trained and know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Staff know what the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm are. Leaders keep accurate records of safeguarding concerns and incidents. These show that all concerns are logged and appropriate follow-up action is taken. Leaders work with a range of outside agencies to support pupils and their families.

Pupils learn about keeping themselves safe on and offline through the computing and PSHE curriculums.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum planning in several subjects is new. This means pupils are learning a lot of fresh content without all the prerequisite knowledge required to understand this. Subject leaders must continue to develop their curriculum plans and use regular checks to ensure staff are following these plans as they intend.

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 November 2011.

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	117461
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10206460
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	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rachel Stringer
Headteacher	Jan Martin
Website	www.woolmergreen.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has before-school and after-school childcare run by school staff and managed by school leaders.
- At the time of the inspection, school leaders were not making use of any alternative provision.
- The school's most recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (section 48) took place in October 2016.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample

of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. She also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspector also looked at curriculum plans and pupils' work in art, science and geography.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to review records. She scrutinised the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. She also spoke to governors, staff and pupils to evaluate safeguarding.
- The inspector reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including the school development plan and minutes of governor meetings.
- During the inspection, the inspector spoke to pupils from different year groups during lessons and at lunchtime and playtime. She also considered the 91 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- To gather parents' views, the inspector reviewed the 79 responses and 50 free-text responses submitted to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also spoke to parents at the end of the school day.
- The inspector gathered staff members' views by speaking to several of them and reviewing the 19 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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