

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Leigh Westleigh Methodist Primary School

Westleigh Lane, Leigh, Lancashire WN7 5NJ

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 February 2025

Outcome

Leigh Westleigh Methodist Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Louise Boardman. This school is part of the Epworth Education trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Julie-Ann Hewitt, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stuart Ellis.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this welcoming and friendly school. They greet visitors warmly. Pupils live out the school's values of respect, love, generosity and equality. The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour across the school, including during lessons and at social times. Pupils are well-mannered and are supportive and encouraging to their friends.

The school has high aspirations for pupils' achievement. Pupils and staff alike share and demonstrate the school's motto of 'all things are possible'. Pupils enjoy learning and they are keen to share all that they know and can do. Pupils take pride in the work that they produce and recognise the importance of trying their best. Typically, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

There are many opportunities for pupils to broaden their horizons. Pupils enjoy trips to museums, places of worship and regularly welcome visitors into school. They take on leadership roles such as playground leaders and school councillors. Older pupils run activities during the day for younger pupils and aim to make the school a fun and safe place for everyone to enjoy. This promotes pupils organisational and leadership skills. Pupils have a voice and are keen to make a difference to their school and local community.

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

There have been many changes to the staff and leadership team since the previous inspection. Staff new to the school receive a thorough induction and ongoing support. Staff are proud to be a part of the school. They benefit from trust-wide well-being support.

In recent years, the school has refined the curriculum so that it is clear what knowledge pupils should learn. The curriculum is ambitious for all, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

Staff have a secure grasp of the subject content that they teach. They deliver this in a clear and fun way that engages and supports pupils' learning. This includes careful adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND, whose needs are identified accurately, can learn alongside their peers.

The school carefully checks what pupils know and can do. Typically, teachers identify and address pupils' misconceptions as they arise. Nonetheless, due to weaknesses with the previous curriculum, some gaps remain in pupils' knowledge. As a result, pupils sometimes struggle to successfully build new learning across the curriculum.

Staff have the skills and expertise to effectively deliver the phonics programme. Children in the Nursery class and in the two-year-old provision develop a love of reading through the books, rhymes and songs that staff share with them. Staff are alert to any children in the Reception class or pupils in key stage 1 who may need extra help to learn sounds and the letters that they represent. Staff act swiftly to ensure that pupils receive well-tailored and effective support. As a result, most pupils, by the time that they are in Year 2, have developed into fluent and confident readers.

In the early years, children learn to play, talk and learn. Staff successfully support children to develop their communication and language skills. As pupils progress through the school, they learn a wide range of subject-specific vocabulary. For example, pupils were keen to justify their thinking about climate, biomes and weather. However, some pupils do not consistently communicate well in writing. This is because the school does not routinely help pupils to write legibly or to spell as accurately as they could.

Children in the early years quickly learn to follow routines and the expectations for their behaviour. Across the rest of the school, pupils behave well. While most pupils attend regularly, the school supports those families where pupils' attendance remains an issue. The school does all that it can to make sure that pupils attend school as often as they should. This approach is bringing about improvements to attendance rates year on year.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. Pupils learn about fundamental British values and understand their importance in everyday life. Pupils learn about different families, what a respectful relationship is and how they can stay safe, fit and healthy. They speak of having a trusted adult in school with whom they can share any worries. Pupils are highly respectful of each other. They are tolerant and celebrate the differences that exist within the school and the wider world in which they live.

The school, trust and the local governing body strive to maintain and improve the standards of education year on year. They are highly ambitious for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the gaps that have developed in pupils' learning, as a result of weaknesses in the previous curriculum, are not addressed swiftly enough. This means that some pupils do not have the secure base on which to build new knowledge. The school should ensure that staff are well-equipped to spot and tackle gaps in pupils' learning so that they make smooth progress through the curriculum.
- Teachers do not build pupils' foundational skills in writing as well as they could. This means that some pupils do not communicate consistently well in writing across the curriculum. The school should ensure that pupils get sufficient opportunities to practise their transcription skills, such as spelling and handwriting, until they are fluent.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in April 2015.

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	140087
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10348293
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stuart Ellis
CEO of the trust	Julie-Ann Hewitt
Headteacher	Louise Boardman
Website	www.westleighmethodist.wigan.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Epworth Multi Academy Trust.
- This is a Methodist church school within the North West District and has MAST as the religious authority. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in September 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due during the academic year 2025/26.
- The school provides nursery provision for 2-year-olds.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school provides a before-school club for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to some pupils read from Year 1 to Year 3.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- The inspector met with the CEO, representatives of the board of trustees and the local governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the methodist academies and schools' trust.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including records of trustees and governing body meetings, the school's evaluation of its strengths and areas for improvement and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school and observed their behaviour at lunchtime. She took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector met with parents at the start of the school day. She took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Sue Dymond, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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