

Inspection of a good school: Leigh Westleigh Methodist Primary School

Westleigh Lane, Leigh, Lancashire WN7 5NJ

Inspection dates:

29–30 October 2019

Outcome

Leigh Westleigh Methodist Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They told me that they always feel safe and that there is no bullying. Pupils know what discriminatory behaviour is and are adamant that it never happens in school because, 'everyone is respected for who they are'.

Pupils like to find out new things. They work hard and behave well in class. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils like to visit museums and galleries, and enjoy their many educational trips to places including Beeston Castle, Jodrell Bank and Ordsall Hall. Pupils regularly participate in extra-curricular activities. They excel in sports such as basketball, dodgeball and football and have participated in cricket and hockey tournaments.

Pupils are good citizens. They have organised events to raise awareness of mental health and diabetes and hosted coffee mornings to support cancer research. Pupils love music and benefit from specialist tuition in various percussion instruments including West African djembe drums, samba drums and the xylophone. Pupils are active in the local community and the church. Pupils respect Christian values and volunteer their services to a range of local and national charities.

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

At Leigh Westleigh Methodist Primary School, pupils' reading skills are rapidly improving. After a decline in reading outcomes at the end of Year 6 in 2019, the new senior leadership team have taken effective action to improve the teaching of reading. They have rejuvenated pupils' love of books and placed the written word firmly at the heart of the curriculum.

Leaders' actions to improve the teaching of reading are reaping rewards. All pupils read daily. Phonics teaching begins as soon as children start their Reception Year. Teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled at teaching phonics. As a result, pupils' phonic skills

are developed well. Those who find reading difficult are being helped to catch up with their peers. As a result, they are reading with greater accuracy and fluency.

Leaders have designed the curriculum well to ensure that pupils make strong progress in reading, mathematics and other subjects, including science and computing. Pupils' writing skills are especially well developed. This is reflected in the quality of pupils' writing and their good achievement by the end of Year 6.

Teachers plan activities which help pupils to develop their skills and knowledge in a wide range of subjects. For example, teachers bring the curriculum to life through providing first-hand experiences. Pupils have met a Second World War veteran and a contemporary soldier, in full combat gear. However, some pupils lack essential skills in history. For example, few can distinguish between a primary source of information, such as an artefact or diary, and a secondary source, such as a photograph of a Stone Age settlement.

Teachers adapt the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, these pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works closely with teachers, parents and carers and a wide range of specialists to ensure that pupils with SEND get the support that they need.

Senior leaders support teachers with training that helps them to teach most subjects well. In computing, for example, pupils are taught to use a range of software. They use their skills to complete interesting tasks, such as producing presentations on topics such as internet safety. Pupils also have strong coding skills. I observed pupils skilfully creating codes and devising instructions to move characters and different objects in interactive games.

Children in the early years are cooperative and curious. They benefit from a stimulating environment and an engaging curriculum. Children are well behaved, attentive and enjoy exploring the world around them. All children, including two-years-olds, are well cared for and have strong bonds with staff.

Staff have high expectations of children. In mathematics, older children are skilled at identifying the names of numbers and carrying out simple subtractions. Children enjoy story time. I observed older children pretending to put on boots, gloves, scarves and coats to match the clothes worn by a character in a story.

The school curriculum extends beyond developing pupils academically. For example, pupils make a valuable contribution to the school community as prefects, eco-council members and library monitors. Pupils raise funding for various good causes and support children's charities.

Leaders monitor pupils' absences closely and reward good attendance. Pupils' attendance is improving but remains below the national average.

The trust, senior leaders and governors are committed to getting the right work-life balance for staff. The staff I talked with told me that they have ample time to learn from each other, teachers in the partner school and subject specialists in the local cluster of schools. New staff said that the support they get from senior leaders is valuable and helps to improve their teaching.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are trained to spot the signs of neglect and/or abuse. They know exactly what to do if they are concerned about the welfare of a pupil. Pupils say that they always feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of internet safety and know how to protect themselves from being exploited.

The school's safeguarding leaders are trained to a high standard. Staff work closely with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils at risk of harm are promptly given the support that they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is delivered affectively overall. This is because subject leaders are trained well, and teaching is strong. However, the leadership, management and teaching of history is not as strong as in other subjects. As a result, some pupils lack important skills, such as understanding the difference between primary and secondary sources of information. In addition, older pupils have difficulty understanding concepts such as bias and propaganda. Leaders should ensure that their plans to develop how this subject is taught are implemented swiftly and effectively.
- The attendance of a small minority of pupils is not good enough. Senior leaders and pastoral staff should maintain their focus and improve overall attendance by working more closely with the parents and carers of children who are persistently absent.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Leigh Westleigh Methodist Primary School to be good on 28–29 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	140087
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10087681
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	204
Appropriate authority	Acorn Trust
Chair of governing body	Dawn Lancashire
Headteacher	Xanthe Moragrega
Website	www.acorntrust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 April 2015

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Acorn Trust, which includes two primary schools. The other school is Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School. Each school has its own headteacher and local advisory board.
- There have been many changes to the school staff since the previous inspection. The senior leadership team was reorganised in September 2019 and includes a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. A new SENCo, several teachers and teaching assistants have been appointed, including one newly qualified teacher. The early years leader is new to post.
- The local advisory board has been reorganised. Most governors, including the chair of the governing body, have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school has provision for a small number of two-year-old children who attend the Nursery on a part-time basis.
- A Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SAIMS) was carried out in September 2017.

Information about this inspection

- I met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. A telephone discussion was held with the school's improvement partner.
- I met with the headteacher as well as members of the senior leadership team and the staff who lead reading, mathematics, computing and history. I held meetings with the leaders who oversee the provision for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- I took account of 32 text messages submitted during the inspection and 29 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I considered responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by 25 members of staff and 95 pupils.
- I focused deeply on reading, history and computing during the inspection. In each subject, I met with the subject leader and teachers. I visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning.
- I met with pupils, teachers and other staff. I talked about safety, personal development and behaviour. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding policy and related policies and documentation. I checked the school's records of the suitability of staff to work with children. I also talked with parents about matters relating to safety.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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