

Inspection of Wittering Primary School

Church Road, Wittering, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE8 6AF

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 June 2022

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

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are warmly positive about Wittering Primary School. They feel safe and happy. They are good at welcoming new pupils. Pupils remember how it feels to be new. Pupils who started at Wittering recently say how quickly they felt at home.

Pupils rise willingly to leaders' encouragement to 'try hard, be nice'. Pupils' conduct in lessons and at breaktimes is purposeful and respectful. Any behaviour incidents are usually minor and resolved quickly by staff.

Pupils understand what bullying is. They say it hardly ever happens. Pupils trust staff to deal with any issues effectively if they arise.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of opportunities they receive at Wittering. They speak highly of the clubs on offer, such as sports clubs. Pupils like meeting visitors, such as firemen and paramedics, who teach them how to be safe.

Older pupils value their extra responsibilities in school, such as being a lunchtime monitor or helping younger pupils.

Despite the school's strengths, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in some subjects. This is because leaders have not identified in enough detail the knowledge that pupils need to learn in every subject.

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

Leaders are reviewing their curriculum plans. Where subject leaders have expert knowledge, some improvements have been made to the curriculum. However, most curriculum leaders do not know the right actions to take because they have not had enough guidance and training, or time to check how well the curriculum helps pupils learn what they need to know.

In some subjects, including English and mathematics, leaders' curriculum thinking does not identify precisely the knowledge that pupils should learn and in what order. This means that sometimes important subject knowledge is missed out or not taught in depth. Teachers do not help pupils remember important knowledge or understand more complex ideas in some subjects. Pupils make better progress in mathematics and English because teachers are adept at planning lessons that build carefully on what pupils have learned previously.

Despite these weaknesses, teachers plan interesting lessons which hold pupils' attention. They check pupils' understanding and provide help to anyone falling behind. Pupils are keen to meet teachers' expectations.

Leaders want all pupils to be enthusiastic readers. They have invested in a wide selection of books that pupils enjoy reading. Leaders are in the process of reviewing

their phonics programme. In the meantime, teachers check that pupils are on track to learn the sounds they need and address any problems. This ensures that most pupils learn to read fluently.

Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are met well. Staff carefully check on how each pupil with SEND is learning. Class teachers adapt lessons well so that pupils with SEND learn the same subjects as other pupils. However, pupils with SEND are disadvantaged by the same weaknesses in the curriculum as other pupils.

Staff ensure that pupils behave well in lessons. Pupils expect to work hard and do their best. Their positive attitudes start in the early years, where children learn to concentrate and persevere. Leaders ensure that the school is an orderly place.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils are taught the skills they need for life, like how to get on well with each other and be healthy. Pupils are offered an impressive range of wider opportunities. For example, all pupils in Years 5 and 6 are in an ambitious brass orchestra. The well-run family centre, which is part of the school, provides help for families as well as bespoke support for pupils.

Children in the early years get off to a good start. Staff have established secure routines so that children settle happily whenever they start. Staff carefully use their checks on children's learning to plan purposeful, interesting learning activities. Children use their early reading and mathematics knowledge to write and use numbers confidently.

Parents are full of praise for the strong sense of community in the school. Staff are proud to work as part of the school team.

The trust and local governing body know the school well. They provide useful challenge to leaders. Trustees and governors understand where improvements are needed and have the expertise to support the school's further improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. Staff are well trained in identifying when pupils may be at risk of harm. Staff pass on any concerns quickly to senior staff. Leaders ensure that pupils get the help they need promptly, including from external agencies when necessary. Leaders ensure that concerns are followed up to ensure that pupils are protected from harm. Leaders make all the right checks to ensure that only suitable staff and volunteers get to work in school.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when using technology and the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject leaders have not been provided with the systematic training and support they need to help them set out what should be taught, and in what order. Many curriculum plans do not enable teachers to have a precise understanding of what they should teach. Some important content is not taught in depth or is not taught at all. This prevents pupils, including those with SEND, from remembering important knowledge and building on their previous learning to develop a deeper understanding in a range of subjects. Senior leaders should ensure that all subject leaders have the training, support and knowledge they need to design a high-quality curriculum.
- School leaders do not have a clear enough picture of how well the curriculum is enabling pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding across the full range of subjects. School leaders need to ensure that subject leaders have the time and support needed to check how well pupils are learning in each subject. Leaders should use these checks to ensure that the intended curriculum is implemented effectively and to inform their improvement plans.

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.

If you are the school and 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	145269
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10226847
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	328
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Claire Spooner
Headteacher	Rhys Thrower
Website	www.wittering.peterborough.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Wittering Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 January 2018. When its predecessor school, also named Wittering Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall. The school is part of the Soke Education Trust.
- The school runs a family centre on the school site, which provides support and information for the parents of children from birth to 5 years or families with primary school age children.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with senior leaders from the school and trust, subject leaders, staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector held discussions with two trustees, including the chair, and three representatives of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, computing and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, staff and pupils, visited a sample of lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised school documentation, including school development plans and governing body minutes.
- Safeguarding records were scrutinised by inspectors, including the single central record of pre-employment checks, and the school's log of safeguarding and behaviour incidents. A meeting was held with a designated safeguarding leader.
- Inspectors considered 51 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and 47 free-text comments. An inspector spoke to parents and carers as they arrived at school in the morning with their children. Inspectors also considered 17 responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey and 34 responses to the Ofsted survey for staff.

Inspection team

Judith Sumner, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Imran Khan	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Harrison	Ofsted Inspector

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