

Inspection of West Down School

West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon EX34 8NF

Inspection dates: 1–2 October 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

West Down is a school where every child feels nurtured and cared for. All pupils and parents who spoke with inspectors said, 'West Down is like one big loving family.' Staff told inspectors, 'We care for the children like they are our own.' This warm ethos permeates the school. Pupils bound into school with a ready smile on their face and are eager to learn. The school day is one of happiness and joy.

Teachers encourage pupils to be the best they can be. Subject specialists teach pupils lessons that are motivating and inspire them to be inquisitive. Pupils achieve well academically. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and find learning both challenging and fun.

Pupils behave very well in school. They listen attentively to each other, and adults, and work hard in lessons. All pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in school. They know how to respond if they feel their safety is at risk. They do not worry about bullying. This is because pupils are adamant that bullying does not happen.

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

There have been significant changes in leadership in recent years. There is a relatively new governing body and a new senior leadership structure in place. The quality of education is good. United, leaders are determined to ensure that pupils' achievement continues to rise. High expectations of behaviour ensure that pupils learn well. Pupils have strong relationships with staff. They are eager to please the adults they work with.

Senior leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They have designed a curriculum that enables pupils to be taught by subject specialists. Subject leaders are knowledgeable and passionate about the subjects they lead. This has only happened in some subjects so far. In those subjects, this is having a positive impact upon pupils' learning.

The curriculum is flooded with chances for pupils to develop their understanding of other people. The arts are a strength of the school. They feature strongly throughout the curriculum. As a result of effective teaching, pupils connect their knowledge and skills from music, dance and drama. This enables pupils to skilfully perform in a range of venues and to different audiences.

Leaders have fostered strong links within the community. This helps pupils to grow into respectful citizens. For example, during the festive period, pupils make and serve Christmas lunch to the elderly. Regular visitors to the school share their careers and experiences of life in modern Britain. This supports pupils' understanding of life in society beyond West Down.

Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a good oversight of this support. She is ably supported by a team of skilled staff who aim to ensure that pupils reach their full potential.

Phonics is taught well across the school. This is because staff are well trained. Teachers check on pupils' progress regularly. Effective coordinated support means pupils who have fallen behind catch up quickly.

Reading is not given a high enough priority in key stage 2. Not enough curriculum time is dedicated to the teaching of reading and understanding different text types. There are still some pupils who do not secure the reading skills necessary for the next stage in their education. This is because the reading curriculum is not well designed in key stage 2.

Leaders have taken decisive action to improve pupils' writing. They have also noticed that some pupils in key stage 2 have weak knowledge of spelling. Teaching staff have participated in research projects to seek out how to improve pupils' writing skills. There are early signs that pupils' spelling skills are strengthening. Nevertheless, for too long, pupils have not achieved well enough. Furthermore, some areas of the writing curriculum do not build sequentially on what pupils already know, can do and understand.

In the early years, children are well looked after. Come rain or shine, staff make the most of the outdoor areas. Adults are attentive to children's needs. They listen carefully and talk to children to help them know more and remember more.

Children have a love of reading instilled upon them as soon as they join the Nursery class. Children listen carefully to adults read and sing along merrily to traditional nursery rhymes. This ensures that they are well placed for the teaching of phonics. As soon as children demonstrate an awareness of sounds, they start to learn phonics.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are well trained in identifying any pupils who may be at risk. They know what to do and how to respond to any concerns. Recruitment processes and pre-employment checks are rigorous. Leaders welcome external audits to check that their systems are robust.

Inspectors spoke to many pupils. Pupils showed a strong understanding of how to stay safe in different circumstances, both inside and outside of school. They say they are safe in school. Pupils are confident that their staff would address any concerns or worries they may have. They know how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although leaders have made significant headway in improving writing, the writing curriculum is not sequenced well enough. It does not allow pupils to build on their component knowledge and skills effectively. Furthermore, weaknesses still exist in some pupils' spelling. This contributes to pupils' low attainment. Leaders need to ensure that pupils are able to know more and remember more, through a well-sequenced writing curriculum, including spelling.
- Reading rightly remains a school priority. A growing number of pupils read with accuracy and understanding by the end of key stage 2. However, there is not a sharp enough focus on ensuring that pupils read a range of different types of texts. Leaders must ensure that pupils in key stage 2 are able to acquire the knowledge and skills required to be a successful reader.
- Leaders have introduced a new approach to the delivery of the curriculum through subject specialists. Early signs indicate that this approach is having a positive impact across the foundation subjects where it is in place. Leaders should check that this curriculum is fulfilling their ambitions and supporting pupils to know more and remember more.

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're 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	113172
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10111625
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Siân Barton
Headteacher	Susan Carey and Faye Poynter
Website	www.westberryfederation.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 June 2012

Information about this school

- There have been considerable changes in leadership over the last 18 months. This includes a co-headteacher structure and the appointment of a deputy headteacher.
- The school is part of Westberry Federation. The federation is made up of two schools.
- The vast majority of governors are new to the governing body. The chair and vice-chair took up their roles in 2018.
- The school was last inspected in June 2012 when it was graded outstanding.
- The school has four classes. The early years provision caters for two- and three-year olds.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average.
- The proportions of pupils with SEND are in line with those seen nationally.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- Inspectors met with the co-headteachers, other senior staff, the leader of SEND, class teachers and three governors. The lead inspector also held a conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to them about their experience of school.
- The inspection concentrated on reading, writing and science. Inspectors also talked to pupils and staff about other areas of the curriculum.
- The school's records of safeguarding checks were reviewed. Inspectors spoke to staff about how they keep pupils safe. They also asked pupils how they keep themselves safe and what to do if they have concerns.
- Inspectors observed pupils playing at break and lunchtimes.
- The lead inspector talked to parents at the beginning of day two of the inspection.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jo Briscoombe

Ofsted Inspector

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