

Inspection of Wistaston Academy

Moreton Road, Crewe, Cheshire CW2 8QS

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 July 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Wistaston as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

The principal of this school is Dominique Griffiths. This school is part of Wistaston Academy 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), Dominique Griffiths and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lynne McMulkin.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils blossom at Wistaston Academy. They are proud to attend this remarkable school. Pupils, who shared their views with inspectors, said that their school is a fun place to learn. They are happy in school and enjoy building fond memories with their friends.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), live up to the school's high expectations for their learning and their personal development. Pupils achieve exceptionally well. They become confident and passionate learners. Pupils are excited to discover new information and appreciate the many worthwhile learning opportunities that the school provides.

Pupils show high levels of self-control and act with care and consideration for others. Their conduct in lessons, on corridors and outside is exemplary. Pupils told inspectors that having a special educational needs (SEN) unit makes the school a more welcoming place for everyone.

Pupils benefit from an exceptional enrichment programme. For example, pupils relish opportunities such as building and racing their own cars, taking part in yoga sessions in the solar dome or spending some quiet time in Acacia's cottage on the playground. Pupils' artwork is magnificent. They are inspired by the wonderful works of art throughout school such as the angel and bee sculptures.

Pupils feel honoured to take on leadership roles including acting as members of the school parliament. They are dedicated to making the school the best that it can possibly be.

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

The school has constructed a broad and highly ambitious curriculum that defines clearly what pupils should learn from the Nursery class until the end of Year 6. Pupils progress tremendously well through the curriculum. They are incredibly well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Staff feel valued. They are proud to work at the school. The school takes staff's well-being into account when making any changes. For example, the training that staff receive to support them in the delivery of the curriculum has been very well received. This is because staff can see that this guidance makes a difference to pupils' learning.

Highly trained and enthusiastic teachers deliver the curriculum with expertise. They skilfully design activities that support pupils to make strong connections between new learning and what they already know. In lessons, teachers quickly identify and correct any misconceptions that pupils may have.

The published data does not reflect the strength of the educational offer at this school. In 2023, some pupils' attainment in reading at the end of key stage 1 at the expected level and at the greater depth level in writing and spelling and grammar at the end of Year 6 was significantly below the national average. Due to the very low starting points of many children and pupils, it takes time for them to catch up with their peers nationally. The school has ensured that there is additional focus on developing pupils' spoken and written language skills. As a result of the school's positive work, current pupils learn very well.

The school prioritises reading and pupils' vocabulary development. Children in the early years are immersed in a language-rich environment, where they enjoy regular songs, rhymes and stories. Across key stages, pupils benefit from a diverse range of books from a variety of authors. Pupils look forward to being rewarded for their positive attitudes to reading by receiving new books from the school's book vending machine.

Staff deliver the phonics programme expertly and with fidelity. Pupils read from books that are carefully matched to the sounds that they already know. Staff act quickly to support pupils who struggle with reading. This enables pupils to read fluently and accurately. Nearly all pupils in Year 1 achieve highly in the phonics screening check. Pupils develop a passion for reading.

Pupils appreciate the kind phrases that they can take from the 'positivitree'. This helps them to feel valued and accepted. Pupils behave extremely well and demonstrate a palpable love of learning. This is because the whole-school community lives and breathes the school's strapline, 'together we learn, together we achieve. Children in the early years are enthralled by explorative activities, such as bug hunting, planting and understanding about road safety. Pupils engage remarkably well during lessons and they produce high-quality work. Pupils become confident learners.

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality. It works closely with parents and carers to overcome any barriers that may prevent pupils from attending school as often as they should. Consequently, pupils are rarely absent from school.

The school has ensured that pupils' personal development is at the heart of its work. Pupils are empowered through a wide range of opportunities to make a tangible difference to their school community. Pupils work together to help look after their mental and physical health. For example, pupils act as well-being and anti-bullying ambassadors. The school organises events to inspire pupils about their possible future careers. Pupils are provided with meaningful real-life experiences. For example, the school recently held an event week where pupils explored the power of robotics and drove a simulated car and experienced real-life hands-on scientific opportunities. Through a range of outdoor opportunities, such as residential visits, pupils benefit from experiences that sensitively take them out of their comfort zone to encourage them to develop self-reliance and independence skills. Pupils are

excellent ambassadors for their school. They learn to celebrate differences. They appreciate belonging to a rich and diverse school community.

Those responsible for governance understand and fulfil their statutory duties diligently. They provide effective support and challenge to the school to continually improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	140647
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10337700
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	464
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lynne McMulkin
Principal and CEO	Dominique Griffiths
Website	www.wistastonacademytrust.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Wistaston Primary School converted to become an academy in March 2014. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school has a special educational needs (SEN) unit. It is designated for up to 14 pupils aged between four and 11 with autism and/or speech, language and communication difficulties. There are currently 14 pupils who access this provision. All pupils have an educational, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club for pupils.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English including early reading, mathematics, art and design and history. They met with subject leaders and with teachers. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in other subjects. They met with leaders, spoke with pupils and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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 lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Helen Friend, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Peter Berry

Ofsted Inspector

Nicky Parkinson

Ofsted Inspector

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