

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: West Town Lane Academy

West Town Lane, Brislington, Bristol BS4 5DT

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 December 2024

Outcome

West Town Lane Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Adrian Robbins. This school is a single-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Louisa Dixon.

What is it like to attend this school?

West Town Lane Academy is a school where 'the learning journey is an adventure'. Staff create a family, caring ethos. Mabel the dog helps to soothe pupils' anxieties, a family of hens scratch happily in their home, little library areas dotted around provide spaces to stop and read a book, and carefully designed classrooms provide calm places to learn. This helps to create an environment in which pupils feel secure. They develop into confident and curious individuals.

Pupils work hard in lessons, building their resilience and determination to complete their learning tasks. Most pupils conscientiously follow the school's rules of being safe, respectful and ready to learn. They are rightly proud of their school and of their work.

Pupils feel safe in school and say that bullying incidents are rare. They know who their trusted adults are. The RADAR values (respect, adventure, determination, achievement and resilience) ripple through the life of the school. These provide staff and pupils with a clear and consistent way of articulating the school's ethos.

The school ensures that pupils achieve well. However, there is no complacency here. The school continues to refine the quality of education that it provides.

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

Clear, strategic thinking at all levels drives school improvement. School leaders, including governors, analyse and evaluate all aspects of the school's work effectively. There is a determination that the school does all it can to help pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve well.

Working on the right priorities at the right time helps to secure consistently high standards. The school uses a wide range of external expertise to ensure that staff receive high-quality professional development. These opportunities are closely matched to the school's improvement priorities. Such training has helped to ensure that the curriculum is delivered consistently well from Nursery through to Year 6. Teachers skilfully encourage pupils to be fully involved in their learning. For example, teachers carefully consider which questions to ask individual pupils. This helps everyone to stay interested during lessons. Pupils recognise that the school helps them to become resilient learners. They proudly and readily identify examples of work where they have kept trying, even when they have found something more difficult.

The curriculum from Nursery onwards is designed well. The school checks how well pupils learn in different subjects, and adapts how the curriculum is delivered as needed. This helps most pupils to learn the curriculum successfully. This includes pupils with SEND, whose needs are swiftly and accurately identified by the school. However, for a few pupils who are working below expectations, assessment information does not identify exactly what pupils need to learn next.

Reading is at the heart of the school's work. A rich reading environment reminds pupils of the wealth of literature and interesting factual books available to them. In the Nursery and Reception classes, stories and songs are the basis for learning. By Year 6, pupils read widely and write with skill, showing a strong understanding of the purpose of their writing and their audience.

As with other subjects, teachers are skilled at delivering the school's phonics programme effectively. This means that most pupils develop secure knowledge of letters and sounds and become confident readers and writers. The school identifies those pupils who fall behind in the phonics programme. However, at times, these pupils, including some who are disadvantaged, do not receive the support that they need to develop their reading fluency as well as they should.

The school works in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that pupils arrive to school on time and attend well. Careful tracking of patterns of attendance ensures that the school is swift to identify any pupils whose attendance declines. Recent work to support families to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been successful.

The school provides a strong programme of personal development for pupils. The school's work to support pupils to develop their character is a strength. Pupils benefit from a rich range of extra-curricular activities and experiences, such as listening to visitors talking about different careers. This helps pupils to raise their aspirations and to be confident

about what they can achieve. Community links are strong and used to further enhance pupils' learning. Pupils experience a wide range of responsibilities, such as being healthy heroes or anti-bullying ambassadors. As a result of these wide experiences, pupils are respectful of others and kind to each other.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils, including some who are disadvantaged, who fall behind during the early stages of learning to read do not receive the additional reading support they need. This slows their development to becoming fluent and confident readers. The school should ensure that those pupils who fall behind in reading are prioritised so that they receive the support that they need to catch up quickly with their peers.
- At times, assessment information for pupils working below expectations does not identify pupils' gaps and the precise next steps in learning they need. As a result, learning is sometimes not matched well to pupils' needs. Consequently, these pupils do not gain ground as well as they could. The school needs to ensure that assessment information clearly identifies pupils' next steps in learning.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2019.

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	137762
Local authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	10344626
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	645
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Louisa Dixon
CEO of the trust	Adrian Robbins
Headteacher	Adrian Robbins
Website	www.wtl.academy
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a single-academy trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. An inspector also met with four trustees and spoke with an external consultant who works with the school.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses from parents shared through letters sent to the inspection team and responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The responses to the staff survey were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Teresa Hill

Ofsted Inspector

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