School report

Inspection of White Court School

Ennerdale Avenue, Great Notley, Braintree, Essex CM77 7UE

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

At White Court School, the mantra of 'nurturing every little acorn to become a mighty oak' is embraced by everyone. Pupils say they feel safe. Parents told inspectors, 'The school listens really well.' Most parents, staff and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Inspectors observed good behaviour throughout the school. Pupils say that there is hardly any bullying at the school. If a pupil is unkind, it is sorted out quickly by adults. Due to clear, shared expectations among staff and pupils, learning environments are calm and purposeful.

In reading and mathematics, pupils benefit from the high expectations that leaders provide for them. The quality of education in most other subject areas is also sound. Overall, pupils achieve well. In a few subjects, leaders' planning and sequencing of knowledge and skills are just beginning to be put in place.

Children in Nursery and Reception are happy and enthusiastic learners. Activities are fun and children behave well in lessons. Children in Reception are well prepared for Year 1.

Pupils take on important roles, such as house captains and school councillors. They contribute to decision-making, such as organising 'Rainbow Day'. This event promoted diversity and tolerance for the work of different artists.

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

Leaders have designed the curriculum so that learning in most subjects is carefully organised and sequenced. Teachers have secure expertise in many of the subjects they teach. They plan appropriate activities to support pupils to achieve well. In most subjects, teachers use assessment effectively to identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. They then ensure that pupils get regular chances to rehearse the key bits of knowledge that matter most. This ensures pupils are confident with key information, such as using mathematical facts. In a few subjects, pupils do not yet get the same opportunities to recall previous learning. This means there are some gaps in their building of knowledge and skills.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported to access the same demanding curriculum as their classmates. The special educational needs coordinators (SENCos) ensure pupils' needs are accurately identified and met. Pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs behave and learn well because they have useful resources to help them understand their emotions. The SENCo works effectively with external specialists.

Leaders provide pupils with regular opportunities to learn the basic sounds they need to begin to read. Pupils who struggle are rapidly identified. Effective extra support is given to help them keep up, including time to read in school. Pupils take

home books that include the specific sounds they have recently learned. This means all pupils are given the opportunity to develop confidence with reading. Most pupils love reading. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'Reading is like watching a movie in your head, but you're the director.' Pupils read widely and enthusiastically because teachers are passionate about promoting different authors, and encourage pupils to read regularly.

Leaders have high expectations for how pupils should behave. Policy and procedures are consistently followed throughout the school and pupils demonstrate positive behaviour. Senior leaders have worked hard to ensure that areas for improvement highlighted at the last inspection have been addressed. Leaders have appointed an attendance lead, whose actions are raising attendance levels towards national levels.

Children in Nursery and Reception make a good start to their education. The early years leader is ambitious for what each child can achieve. The curriculum is carefully structured and children concentrate hard when learning. Children behave well because they love their learning activities.

Leaders' promotion of pupils' personal development is exceptional. They have designed a curriculum that ensures pupils leave the school with the skills, knowledge and understanding to be highly valuable members of society. Pupils are bold when explaining their acceptance of each other's differences. They are committed to celebrating the diversity in their world, without hesitation.

Attending visits and clubs are opportunities welcomed by all pupils. They could identify the many clubs they had attended that inspired them and describe the benefits.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and are a focus from the moment they start school. The curriculum has been designed to ensure pupils learn age-appropriate information that supports longer-term development. This includes knowledge about how they can care for their mental health.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the support from leaders for their well-being and workload. Governors support and challenge leaders well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an established culture of safeguarding across the school. Pupils are well known to adults, who are alert to pupils' needs and anxieties. Staff are well trained and are confident to identify and report concerns. Leaders work well with external agencies in providing extra support and help for pupils who require it. Leaders ensure that all appropriate checks on the suitability of staff are carried out. Governors make regular and robust checks on the school's safeguarding procedures.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and outside school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of subjects have recently been adapted and improved. Currently, in these subjects, pupils do not have regular enough opportunities to practise recalling and applying the knowledge they are required to learn. This leads to some variation in what pupils can confidently remember over time. Leaders need to ensure that all curriculum planning details the most important knowledge and skills that pupils should recall and remember fluently.

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' 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	114988
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10240963
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	606
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Melissa Mulgrew
Headteacher	Candida Burrell
Website	www.whitecourtschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club.
- The nursery provides 42 part-time places.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science, history and computing. These included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons,

meetings with staff and pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work and a review of any curriculum documentation.

- Inspectors met with subject leaders for physical education, music and geography. They also scrutinised some pupils' work, spoke with pupils and reviewed curriculum documentation.
- Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding lead and scrutinised documents related to pupils' behaviour, safety and well-being.
- Inspectors met with members of the SENCo team and scrutinised provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors spoke to parents collecting their children at school. There were 96 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors considered 52 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils when visiting lessons, at formal meetings and on the playground to gather their views.

Inspection team

Stephen Cloke, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Judith Sumner	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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