

West Minster Primary School

URN: 118438 | Inspected: 25 November 2025

Safeguarding

standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

Achievement

Strong standard

Pupils achieve very well in this school. Although historic phonics outcomes were below national averages, recent improvements in teaching mean significantly more pupils now use phonics to read confidently. As a result, the proportion of pupils meeting expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics is consistently above the national average. Disadvantaged pupils also achieve significantly well compared to the national average. This ensures that all pupils, including the most disadvantaged, are well prepared for secondary education. The school makes deliberate decisions, such as targeted interventions, to ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported to achieve all that they are capable of. In lessons, pupils produce high-quality work. They read, write and speak with flair. They use correct grammar, punctuation and presentation skills that show strong progress from weak starting points. Pupils are consistently very well prepared for the next stage of education.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The school's broad and ambitious curriculum fosters pupils' pride in living on the Isle of Sheppey by embedding local contexts and significant figures. The curriculum is designed and sequenced well. It revisits key ideas and concepts regularly. This enables pupils to deepen their understanding with each encounter. The school is aspirational and regularly evaluates the quality of teaching and the curriculum to ensure that they meet the needs of all pupils effectively. Leaders are in the process of adjusting parts of the wider curriculum to ensure that pupils learn to the same depth and security in all subjects. Teachers select books carefully to support learning and inspire pupils' imagination. Each classroom is vocabulary-rich, helping pupils use new words confidently. Pupils who need support to read catch up rapidly by the end of key stage 2. The teaching of mathematics, reading, speaking and writing is expert. Teachers thread the practice of these skills seamlessly through all learning opportunities. Staff use inclusive strategies, such as handwriting support, to ensure that pupils access the full curriculum alongside their peers. Pupils who need more intensive support in lessons receive effective help. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge. They explain new ideas in clear ways. This helps pupils to make connections between prior and new learning. Teachers use assessment effectively to identify pupils who need help and provide immediate support.

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Early years

Strong standard

Children in the early years thrive because of a well-designed curriculum taught by skilled staff who know them extremely well. The school has recently opened additional nursery provision for 2-year-old children. Staff supporting these children are knowledgeable about child development. When children start school, staff consider children's starting points carefully. They engage purposefully with parents and carers to identify and remove barriers to success. Staff use proven methods to ensure that children make excellent progress. Staff make precise checks on children's communication skills and identify those still developing language. They use this information to plan teaching that reflects children's needs and interests. They ensure that all children engage positively with learning and meet important stages of development. Where children begin with very low starting points, staff plan targeted activities that close gaps in their development. Staff use well-crafted questions to extend thinking and create opportunities for children to acquire new skills and knowledge. Children practise new words and concepts in meaningful contexts. For example, they count objects during tidy-up routines to embed mathematical language. Tasks are ambitious, engaging and aligned with curriculum aims. They enable children to develop and apply crucial skills such as learning to read and write. Staff place a sharp focus on key skills such as pencil grip and fine motor development. Through attentive listening and skilful responses, staff enrich learning and ensure that children build strong foundations for future success.

Inclusion

Strong standard

At this school, inclusivity shapes every aspect of life. Leaders adopt an expert and coordinated approach to support pupils with diverse needs, ensuring no child is left behind.

Staff identify barriers pupils face when they join the school. Leaders review the impact of support to ensure that pupils learn and develop successfully. Staff work closely with professionals, parents and carers to provide tailored support for pupils who need personalised or medical care. The school ensures that staff have expertise in speech and language programmes. For example, enhanced training enables staff to help pupils communicate through symbols, technology and signing. This allows pupils to participate fully in learning and school life. Staff understand the challenges that pupils may face and adapt provision responsively, equipping them with the resources and skills to thrive academically and personally. Skilled staff deliver interventions that help pupils to manage their feelings and engage positively in their learning. The school works with the virtual school to access training and resources, ensuring that vulnerable pupils receive impactful support. Leaders foster a culture where every pupil feels valued. They use pupil premium and sports funding effectively to enrich experiences, such as the breakfast club. Alternative provision is used well. The school also supports local schools and works with parents to share strategies that promote inclusion. Personal development and well-being Strong standard The school's approach to personal development is highly effective. The school understands the difficulties that pupils and their families may encounter. The school ensures that pupils overcome these barriers and experience a curriculum that extends beyond the classroom. Pupils reflect on their own traditions and celebrate those of

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others, for example making Rangoli art during Diwali. Pupils visit different places of worship to deepen their understanding of modern Britain. There are many opportunities for pupils to demonstrate fundamental British values, such as democracy when voting for rewards and pupil leadership roles. Pupils feel important because their opinions are used to influence decisions that the school makes, such as celebration events. A plethora of visits, trips and clubs extends pupils' artistic and musical talents. Adaptations are made to ensure that pupils with special needs and/or disabilities can participate fully in the offer. There is a wide range of clubs open to every pupil. These include nursery breakfast club, debating and music. Leaders track participation closely to remove financial and social barriers that vulnerable pupils may face. Pupils represent the school in public performances and sports fixtures, which helps them to gain in confidence and resilience. The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is well sequenced. It is adapted to meet pupils' needs and fulfils statutory requirements. The school regularly reviews the PSHE curriculum to ensure that it reflects up-to-date content, including risks linked to social media platforms and how to stay safe in the community. Staff carefully check the effectiveness of the curriculum to identify and support pupils who need additional help. Pupils leave school resilient, confident, considerate and well prepared for their

next steps

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Pastoral support is purposeful. Pupils who need a therapeutic approach receive help to manage their feelings and worries. The school shares these approaches with parents and carers to instil a joined-up approach between school and home. Expected standard

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders and governors act strategically and understand the context of the community the school serves. Priorities focus on enhancing provision and improving life chances, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those facing barriers to learning. Decisions are made in pupils' best interests. Leaders monitor progress against priorities, such as attendance, and use regular evaluation to inform strategic planning. Their effectiveness is evident in the recently raised standards of phonics teaching across the school. There is still some work to do to ensure that oversight of school priorities is shared across the wider leadership team. Governors provide clear direction for school improvement. They ensure that resources support pupils' academic achievement and wellbeing. Governors monitor the school's progress closely to confirm that it is making sustained progress against development priorities. They also ensure that the school engages actively with professionals to collaborate and share best practice, thereby strengthening the provision further. Leaders are positive role models, maintaining an honest and reflective approach to improvement. For example, they recognise that certain curriculum subjects require additional strengthening. Leaders aspire to develop staff leadership capacity to sustain long-term impact. Aspiring new leaders engage actively with developmental programmes to strengthen their leadership skills. Leaders manage workload and wellbeing effectively, ensuring staff feel well supported and valued. Many staff remain long-standing because they enjoy working with pupils and their families. Professional

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development is purposeful and equips staff with the skills to deliver high-quality teaching. The school contributes positively to the wider community. Leaders host events for parents and carers as well as local residents, including adult education classes and workshops on inclusion for local schools. This outward-facing approach strengthens community links and demonstrates the school's commitment to serving its context.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

This school lives up to its motto, 'Dreams come true with a positive view.' Pupils flourish in this highly inclusive environment which fosters belonging and aspiration. Children feel confident and proud of their school. They enjoy learning and opportunities to make a difference, such as joining the 'Wombles club' to pick up litter. Pupils consistently demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviour towards staff and peers. Playtimes and lunchtimes are joyful, with pupils playing happily together. Pupils trust staff to address worries swiftly whenever they arise. As a result, pupils feel safe because bullying and unkindness are rare. Pupils demonstrate the school's values, such as kindness, listening to each other's opinions and celebrating cultural differences. The school takes a committed and strategic approach to improving attendance so that pupils achieve even greater academic success. However, some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This can limit their achievement. From the early years onwards, staff give pupils a strong start by identifying and removing barriers to learning and wellbeing. Staff's expertise in child development and strategies that strengthen communication and language help pupils learn very well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive support to articulate themselves with growing confidence, enabling them to thrive. The school works in close, effective partnership with parents and carers, and professionals, to ensure that pupils' support is precisely tailored. The curriculum is ambitious and, in most subjects, is well designed. It broadens pupils' awareness of the world around them. Effective teaching builds pupils' knowledge and understanding steadily, with increasing complexity. Staff know that many pupils may begin with very low literacy and numeracy skills. They respond expertly, adapting their teaching of reading and mathematics to help pupils gain confidence and fluency. This ensures that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve highly across all subjects. By the end of key stage 2, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to develop their work with professionals, parents and carers to remove the barriers to positive attendance so that the number of pupils who are routinely absent continues to reduce.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

The school understands the impact that poor attendance has on pupils' success and recognises that some pupils do not attend school often enough. Leaders have a clear and well-structured approach to checking pupil attendance. They respond quickly to declining attendance. This precise understanding of attendance means that pupils and their families receive consistent, high-quality support. Historically, school attendance data has been below the national average, but is steadily improving. Attendance of disadvantaged pupils is in line with the national average. This is indicative of the impact of the school's dedicated work to improve attendance for more

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vulnerable pupils. The school must continue to refine its approaches with families and professionals so that pupils' attendance improves further. A sense of purposeful and positive learning pervades the school. Pupils behave very well. Calm, consistent routines are rooted in a culture of high expectations. Pupils enjoy learning. This is evident in the high levels of sustained concentration and effort they put into each part of their day. Leaders take quick and effective action to support pupils in managing their behaviour well. Staff take effective action to address incidents of unkindness between pupils. Staff foster positive relationships with the families of its pupils. This helps the school work in an effective partnership with parents and carers to ensure that pupils succeed.

For detailed performance data including disadvantage gap analysis, historical trends, and comparison tables, visit the school's profile on WhatSchool:

<https://whatschool.ai/en/school/west-minster-primary-school-sheerness>