

West Meadows Primary School

URN: 140460 | Inspected: 06 January 2026

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 Needs attention

Achievement in national tests over time has been below national averages. This has recently improved and many areas are now close to average, although outcomes in phonics have declined. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who are disadvantaged is broadly in line with averages for these groups. The number of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics has increased. However, pupils' ability to recall knowledge from previous learning is inconsistent. Across all year groups, the quality of pupils' work in books in all subjects is variable. Some pupils have gaps in basic knowledge and skills, such as handwriting. Similarly, some pupils' fluency and accuracy in reading are not as developed as they should be. Leaders have taken appropriate action to address this but this is at an early stage. This means that some pupils are not as well prepared for their

next steps

in education as they need to be.

Curriculum and teaching Needs attention

The implementation of the curriculum is variable. Leaders have recently redesigned and strengthened the curriculum. Initially, this was focused on reading, writing and mathematics. It has now appropriately been expanded to include all subjects taught across the school. The curriculum is well sequenced, ambitious, broad and balanced. It identifies the knowledge that pupils need before moving on to their

next steps

. However, the way that the curriculum is taught is not consistently effective. At times, staff do not check that pupils have understood the most important information before moving on to the next activity. This means that there are gaps in some pupils' learning and foundational knowledge which can lead to them falling behind. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who face other barriers to their learning. Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching at the school. They have established a comprehensive and appropriate programme of professional development which supports teachers to develop their expertise. There is evidence of greater consistency in teaching across the school as a result of this, but it is in the early stages.

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Early years Needs attention

Leaders have recently implemented a new early years curriculum. This is well considered. It meets all statutory requirements and has raised expectations for what children can achieve. Leaders are providing staff with appropriate training to enable them to teach this curriculum well. However, there is variation in the implementation of this curriculum, which limits how well some children are prepared for key stage 1. Children in the Nursery Year generally get off to a secure start in their learning and development. This is less well developed during the Reception Year. The teaching of phonics is also variable. Children learn how to read from the start of the Reception Year. They enjoy hearing stories that are read to them by their teachers. However, teachers do not always teach sounds precisely. This sometimes means that pupils struggle to decode texts. Children in the early years enjoy learning, and they engage with activities well. They develop their personal, social and emotional skills through these activities. Children are able to develop the key areas of learning through provision activities and play. However, adult interactions with children are not of consistently high quality. Sometimes, staff do not develop children's language, vocabulary and basic knowledge as well as they could. Staff engage with parents to support them to work in partnership with the school.

Inclusion Needs attention

Leaders are working to establish consistency in the way in which pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported. Leaders have high ambitions for all pupils. They are working to develop a culture of inclusivity across the school. Systems to identify pupils' individual needs and to address barriers to learning, including the needs of pupils with SEND, have been strengthened recently. This has been well supported by the trust. As a result, staff have a more accurate understanding of how to support these pupils. However, this is in the early stages, and the way in which staff implement these plans is variable. Leaders have implemented an evidence-based pupil premium strategy. The strategy is well considered, and well informed by the school's context. While the full impact of this strategy is still to be realised, it has led to improvements in attainment and attendance for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders work closely with families and external agencies to develop the support for vulnerable pupils. Leaders work well with the virtual school. Personal education plans, which set out the support for looked-after children, are constructed appropriately and reviewed regularly.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

New leadership has only been in place for a short time. However, there is already demonstrable evidence of the positive impact of changes that have been implemented across the school. Leaders make decisions that are in pupils' best interests. There is a clear moral purpose to leadership at the school. This is underpinned by effective systems of quality assurance and school improvement strategies. These are well supported by the trust. Leaders and trustees have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and the areas for development. They have taken decisive and appropriate actions to address the areas that need attention and to improve provision at the school. Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate training. There is a clear programme of professional

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learning mapped across the school, which builds staff expertise. Trustees have a clear vision for the school and ensure that it meets its statutory responsibilities. Leaders have established a wide range of methods to engage with parents and carers. Despite this, there remain some parents in the community who are less positive about the school. Leaders are considerate of staff's workload and wellbeing. Staff appreciate this. Needs attention

Personal development and wellbeing Needs attention

The school has recently made significant changes to all aspects of its personal development offer. These are appropriate and well considered but need time to embed to see the full impact on pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Leaders have recently introduced a new curriculum covering personal, social and health education and relationships education. This meets statutory requirements, and leaders have consulted with families about recent changes. Through weekly lessons, pupils learn about a breadth of content, including equality, fundamental British values and how to maintain positive physical and mental health. However, pupils' knowledge of this curriculum is uneven and, in some cases, lacks depth. Aspects linked to pupil safety and wellbeing have been prioritised, and these come through more strongly in pupils' understanding. However, pupils are less clear about other areas, such as an understanding of other cultures. Leaders recognise that extra-curricular provision in the past has been limited. They have acted quickly to address this through launching an updated wider offer of educational visits and enrichment. This is built around the 'West Meadows Moments That Matter' pledge. This includes 5 core areas: lifetime experiences, curriculum focus, people and places of worship, sports and arts performance, and community links. Some pupils have begun to experience these. For example, Year 6 pupils have attended a recent residential visit to build their independence. Pupils have also taken part in 'Crucial Crew' workshops to consider scenarios about how to keep themselves safe, tackling issues including knife crime and fire safety. The number of pupils who have accessed extra-curricular clubs is now tracked carefully and is increasing. However, uptake is limited, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. There is a clear programme of pastoral support available to pupils. This comprises a combination of internal provision and external support. This has supported many pupils to access school more happily and confidently.

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

West Meadows Primary School is an improving school. Pupils are safe and happy. Most enjoy learning at school. However, some do not attend school regularly enough. Pupils generally behave well and show respect for others. Bullying occurs rarely. If it does, it is dealt with quickly and appropriately. Over time, pupils have not achieved consistently well. This includes children in the early years. However, new leadership has raised expectations and standards. Pupils have better opportunities to develop academically and socially because of changes leaders have recently made. Adaptations to the curriculum and teaching have begun to improve pupils' learning. Not every pupil is getting the same positive experience in lessons but leaders are taking quick steps to change this. Staff know how to support pupils who are vulnerable, including pupils who are disadvantaged, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who face other barriers to their learning. Leaders have developed approaches to make this even better, but it is not done consistently well across the school. A revised programme to support pupils' personal development has recently been introduced. This has supported pupils to develop their understanding of fundamental British values and the importance of equality. However, this is in the early stages, and some pupils' understanding is more secure than others. The introduction of the 'West Meadows

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Moments That Matter' programme across the school offers opportunities for pupils to engage with a number of extra-curricular clubs and activities. These include community events such as carol singing in a local care home. Some pupils are already engaging with this programme, and leaders recognise the need to expand participation further.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff consistently implement the school's revised approach to teaching and learning effectively, including in the early years, to ensure that children and pupils develop the necessary knowledge to progress to the next stage of education.
- Leaders should further embed training for staff to ensure that the identified needs of pupils are met, including pupils with special needs and/or disabilities, and that gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge and skills are supported and closed rapidly.
- Leaders should further embed the implementation of the attendance strategy to ensure that pupils attend well.
- Leaders should further increase participation in extra-curricular activities, particularly for pupils who are disadvantaged.
- Leaders should continue to develop systems of communication to ensure that parents support the work of the school as fully as possible.

Attendance and behaviour Needs attention

Leaders analyse attendance information closely to establish patterns around absence. There are clear systems to identify barriers to attendance. Leaders have recently established a revised attendance strategy. This has begun to show improvements in pupils' attendance. For example, there has been a reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school. Leaders have held events such as workshops to support pupils, parents and carers in understanding the importance of good attendance. However, overall attendance remains below the national average and improving this area remains a priority for leaders. Some pupils still do not attend school as regularly as they should. Pupils' behaviour is generally calm around the school. Most pupils are keen to learn in lessons. There are occasions where pupils can be more physical during social time. Where this is the case, staff address the issue quickly and effectively. Behaviour routines and systems have recently been revised. These are generally understood by pupils, staff and parents. Sometimes, however, these systems are not followed by staff as consistently as they need to be. Bullying is rare and it is not tolerated.

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-meadows-primary-school-barnsley>