

Watchlytes Primary School

URN: 149333 | Inspected: 09 December 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

Expected standard

On the whole, pupils learn and achieve well. They progress through the curriculum well, remembering much of what they have been taught. Younger pupils secure their knowledge of phonics and writing skills to help them as they move through the school. Pupils' ability and confidence in mental mathematical calculations have been strengthened over the past few years. Leaders' sharp focus on early number work is having positive impact. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn well from their varied starting points. Older pupils, especially those who experienced weaker teaching in the past before current leaders joined the school, have some gaps in their knowledge in some subjects. While these gaps are diminishing quickly, some older pupils do not have the depth of knowledge they need. Despite this, and over the past few years, more and more pupils leave the school ready for their secondary school education.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have implemented a coherent and ambitious curriculum that is making a real positive difference in how well pupils learn. Over the past few years, leaders' work has ensured the quality of the curriculum and teaching has improved considerably. The youngest pupils learn to read well. Most pupils are keeping pace with the school's phonics programme. This success leads from staff's strong subject knowledge and fidelity to the chosen approach. Similarly, from the earliest stages, pupils acquire the essential skills needed to become fluent and confident writers. Staff ensure that children learn to hold a pencil correctly and form letters accurately, laying the groundwork for later success. Teachers have secure subject knowledge in the subjects they teach. They make careful checks to ensure pupils remember important knowledge. For example, pupils face regular checks on their mathematical calculations, with teachers adapting activities if pupils need more practice to master a concept. Teachers promptly address misconceptions. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils receive the support they need to thrive. Pupils benefit from high-quality teaching in many subjects. However, leaders know there is more to do to ensure this high-quality practice is consistent across all subjects of the curriculum.

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Early years

Strong standard

Across both the Nursery and Reception classes, children benefit enormously from a highly ambitious curriculum, which is expertly taught by staff. Leaders' ambition and relentless focus on ensuring every child, particularly the most disadvantaged, learns and develops extremely well, is borne out in practice. Children benefit from rich interactions with adults. Staff are highly skilled at ensuring children receive regular and precise interactions, helping them develop their use and understanding of language. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged children, who are regularly sought out by staff. As a result, children become confident communicators with adults and one another. Not only do children learn to read, write and understand number extremely well, but they also benefit greatly from the rich provision. They learn to control their bodies and movements with great skill. They become resilient when things do not go their own way, and develop high levels of concentration and independence, appropriate to their age. Staff quickly understand children's individual needs. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are quickly identified, and support is swiftly put in place to help and guide them to learn well. Staff form highly effectively links with parents and carers by working in close partnership with them. Expected standard

Inclusion

Expected standard

There is a well-established culture of inclusion across the school. Staff accurately identify barriers to pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive well-tailored support because staff know the most important knowledge and skills they need to grasp. Staff keep the individual needs of disadvantaged pupils high on their agenda. Leaders monitor the impact of pupil premium funding with precision. As a result, pupils receive full access to the curriculum, and extra-curricular opportunities, targeted support and specific interventions help to address a pupil's individual needs.

Leaders and staff keep a close eye on how well pupils learn the curriculum. For example, leaders regularly review how well pupils with SEND are learning to make sure the provision they receive is exactly what they need. Staff are well trained to deliver the right support for pupils, whatever their individual need. Highly positive relationships with parents and carers, and external agencies, ensure that the support is tailored for pupils' needs and has a positive impact on their learning and wider experiences of school. In the past, a small number of pupils learned outside of the classroom because they struggled to manage their emotions and behaviour. As a result of high-quality work by leaders and staff, this is no longer the case. These pupils now have the skills to manage their emotions, enabling them to be part of their wider peer group in class.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

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Since the school joined the trust, and new leaders came on board, they have brought about significant improvements in the school over time. Their skilled and determined work has resulted in an improved quality of provision. This is especially the case in the early years, where children make a strong start to their time in school. Leaders have taken the right actions, in the right order, at the right time to improve the school. They know with precision where further improvement is needed to continue to make the school even better for pupils. Leaders are getting on with this work; always acting with the very best interests of pupils in all they do. Staff receive regular and relevant professional learning to ensure they keep their practice sharp. This includes those in the early stages of their careers. Staff are enormously dedicated to the school and pupils. They have been, and remain, fully on board with the journey of improvement. This is because leaders have established a culture of support for staff, in particular around their workload and wellbeing. Trustees and governors carry out their statutory duties very well. There is a harmonious working relationship between the trust board and the local governing body, meaning the flow of information between all is clear. Trustees and governors remain strategic in their approach. They provide highly valued support to leaders. However, they do not shy away from challenging leaders to ensure the school continues to improve even further.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Pupils benefit from a well-structured programme of personal, social and health education that begins in the early years and builds progressively across year groups. This ensures that pupils acquire the essential knowledge and skills they need to prepare for their future lives. They learn to celebrate differences, respect the views of others and develop an age-appropriate understanding of relationships and how to stay safe, particularly online. The school places a high emphasis on pupils' wellbeing. Strategies such as worry boxes enable pupils to share concerns confidently, knowing that adults will listen and help. Older pupils learn practical ways to support their mental health and understand the importance of physical activity for a healthy lifestyle. Lunchtimes are active and purposeful, with pupils of all ages engaging enthusiastically with a wide range of playground equipment. These activities are not only fun, but also promote cooperation, sharing and problem-solving, helping pupils to develop positive social skills. Extra-curricular provision is broad, with a wide offering of clubs and activities. Leaders check carefully that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from these, which they do. Pupils who are young carers receive tailored support that helps them manage the challenges they face. Pupils are well prepared for life beyond school. They develop a secure understanding of concepts such as democracy through the well-established school council. Pupils demonstrate a clear sense of right and wrong, supported by the school's strong partnership with local police officers. These links provide valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about the law, staying safe and contributing positively to their community. Opportunities such as these, lead to pupils becoming well-rounded young people as they leave the school at the end of Year 6.

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

Pupils attend a school where their needs are first and foremost in the work of all staff. They enjoy warm and caring relationships with staff. This means that pupils are safe in school and feel they are part of the

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whole-school community. Classrooms are calm and welcoming places. Pupils can concentrate in lessons because they, and their peers, behave well. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and one another, trying hard in each lesson. They enjoy learning and showing their newfound knowledge as they move through the school. Pupils progress through the curriculum well, whatever their own individual needs. Pupils attend regularly. While instances of bullying are very rare, pupils have great faith that staff will provide them with the right help if they have a falling out with a friend. Children in the early years get off to a flying start as they begin their journey through school. The care and education they receive is of very high quality. The playground at lunchtime is abuzz with activity. Whether using equipment to make large models, creating an assault course or using resources to tell stories, pupils are immersed in activity. They play, laugh and smile together. Pupils of different ages mix well, with older pupils and play leaders keeping a close and caring eye on how the younger pupils are doing. Pupils benefit from the range of wider opportunities on offer. Members of the choir delight in performing to audiences large and small, the gardening club are dedicated to tending to the school's allotment area and those who represent the school in sporting events do so with pride and determination. Pupils are central to decisions made in school, and the school council members readily share their views with staff about a range of themes.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to fully embed highly effective teaching across all subjects in the curriculum.
- Leaders should widen their effective work in improving attendance, to ensure all pupils consistently arrive in class promptly each morning.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Pupils attend well. Leaders' determined efforts to improve attendance over time is paying off. They review pupils' attendance closely and step in if they see a pupil's attendance start to slip. Staff take supportive and sensible action to help get a pupil's attendance back on track. Leaders have now set their sights on ensuring all pupils arrive in school on time to ensure the school day starts swiftly and purposefully so all pupils maximise the time they have in school. The school is calm and welcoming. Classrooms are purposeful environments, where pupils are eager to get stuck into their learning. Pupils recognise the high expectations that leaders and staff set, and they live up to these. This is true whether in the classroom, dinner hall or playground. Pupils follow the school routines, meaning there is a calm atmosphere across the school as pupils move around. Pupils who need a little more support and guidance to manage their emotions and behaviour receive high-quality support. This results in these pupils successfully overcoming the barriers they face in managing their own actions and words.

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/watchlytes-primary-school-welwyn-garden-city>