

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Widey Court Primary School

Widey Lane, Crownhill, Plymouth, Devon PL6 5JS

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 February 2025

Outcome

Widey Court Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Shaun Nicholls. This school is part of Connect Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Stuart Bellworthy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ian Mitchell.

What is it like to attend this school?

Widey Court Primary is a large school with a warm, family atmosphere greatly appreciated by the families it serves. The school's values lie at the heart of school life. Staff and pupils consistently demonstrate these values in their attitudes and behaviours. The school is a safe, caring community where everyone feels they belong.

Staff are aspirational and have high expectations for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils try their utmost to live up to these expectations. They work hard and engage fully in their learning. As a result, pupils achieve well.

Pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is exemplary. Staff deal with any very occasional incidents of poor behaviour effectively. Pupils trust staff to help them with any worries they may have.

The school promotes pupils' personal development exceptionally well. Pupils develop self-confidence and build self-esteem. They enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular clubs. For example, the successful field gun club where pupils learn to work as a team and build resilience is very popular. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6 they are well-rounded individuals who are thoroughly prepared for secondary education.

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

The curriculum, including in early years, sets out the key skills and knowledge that pupils will learn over time. Teachers deliver subject content in a logical order. This supports pupils to build on what they already know as well as learn new and more complex concepts.

Staff have strong subject knowledge. They select learning activities that help pupils to secure the knowledge they have been taught. Pupils with SEND receive high-quality provision. Careful identification of pupils' individual needs enables staff to provide targeted interventions and support. This enables these pupils to learn the curriculum alongside their peers.

Pupils routinely revisit their learning, which helps them to remember important knowledge. Teachers help pupils to develop their subject-specific vocabulary, which enables pupils to use precise language when explaining their work. For example, pupils confidently use words such as 'chassis' when describing their work in design and technology.

The school has prioritised reading, with staff trained to deliver the phonics programme effectively. Children begin learning to read as soon as they start in Reception. Staff provide effective support for those needing extra help. This builds pupils' confidence, helping most to become fluent, accurate readers.

The school has a well-thought-through approach to teaching writing. This supports pupils to learn the skills needed to become confident writers. However, the school's high expectations of the quality of pupils' writing are not always applied consistently across the curriculum. There is inconsistent checking of the accurate use of grammar and punctuation in some subjects. This means that pupils who need support with this do not always reach the high standards that the school expects in their writing across the curriculum.

In the early years, an exciting environment that is rich with learning experiences nurtures children's learning. There is a strong focus on developing children's early numeracy and literacy skills. For example, children acquire the physical skills they need to prepare them for early writing.

Attendance is high. Staff build excellent, trusting relationships with parents and carers. This enables the school to provide effective help and support to families where attendance is a concern. The high-quality curriculum and the warm, positive relationships that pupils develop with staff make the school a place pupils want to come to.

There is an exceptionally strong focus on promoting pupils' personal development and positive mental health. Pupils who need help to play cooperatively at playtimes have a space to go to. Here, skilled staff provide focused support to enable these pupils to play games with their friends successfully. Pupils have a remarkable, in-depth understanding of fundamental British values. They speak maturely about the importance of equal

opportunities for all. This prepares pupils well to become active citizens in the culturally diverse communities found in modern Britain.

Leaders at all levels work collaboratively to continually improve the school. There is a strong, shared understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need to develop further. Trustees and governors have robust processes in place to ensure they are well informed about the impact of the school's work. This gives them the insight they need to hold leaders to account. Staff feel highly valued. They greatly appreciate the support that school and trust leaders show for their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, checking of pupils' grammar and punctuation is not used well enough to identify errors. This means that pupils repeat grammar and punctuation errors and do not achieve the depth of writing the school expects. The school should ensure that staff accurately identify errors and misconceptions in pupils' writing in all subjects.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Widey Court Primary, to be good for overall effectiveness in September 2012.

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	143309
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10344767
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	607
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ian Mitchell
CEO of the trust	Stuart Bellworthy
Headteacher	Shaun Nicholls
Website	www.wideycourt.plymouth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Connect Academy Trust.
- The school does not currently use any provider of alternative provision.
- There is a before- and after-school club managed by the school.

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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, trust leaders, trustees and two representatives of the local governing body.

- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times. They spoke with different groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school, their learning, their behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and also took into consideration the responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Mark Burgess, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Lovett

Ofsted Inspector

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