

Overview

Westacre Middle School proudly serves students aged 9 to 12, fostering a stimulating learning environment that nurtures academic, social, and emotional growth. With a strong commitment to holistic education, students are empowered to reach their full potential and achieve future success in life.

Leaders prioritise academic excellence, ensuring that students receive a rigorous and engaging curriculum that aligns with national standards. Through a comprehensive range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, humanities, and technology, students gain a deep understanding of various disciplines and develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. Beyond academic rigor, the school recognises the importance of a well-rounded education. The school actively promotes extracurricular activities, offering a diverse range of clubs and events that cater to students' diverse interests and talents. From sports and physical activities to arts and crafts, students have ample opportunities to explore their passions, develop new skills, and enhance their overall wellbeing.

Staff cultivate a nurturing and supportive environment where students feel valued, safe, and encouraged to thrive. The school's dedicated team of teachers and support staff fosters a positive and inclusive atmosphere, ensuring that every student feels respected and supported in their learning journey. The school's strong sense of community extends beyond the classroom, embracing parents and guardians as integral partners in their children's education.

The school has worked hard to engage with parents and develop a sense of belonging to level the playing field for as many families as they can. Attendance is a major focus and by working closely with parents to remove barriers to getting pupils into school attendance has improved. Coffee mornings, Mother's and Father's Day, and work alongside sessions help engage adults in a low-stakes manner to build trust, and as a consequence attendance is now in line with national.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) is well supported in the school and there are 3 parental meetings a year taken by the class teacher to further build relationships and get to know individual needs better. Any parents with low engagement in any area of school life are specifically targeted to ensure they attend and that relationship-building can begin. Pupil's voice has been significantly enhanced through the range of opportunities available to pupils and through analysis of the engagement of different groups such as SEN and Pupil Premium (PP). Any ambassador roles are formally applied for and curriculum time is given over to completing the applications. They were able to apply via poster, PowerPoint, letter, etc. to ensure everyone could access the opportunity. The process was recently moved from September to July so the teacher who knew them best was the person to support them rather than a new member of staff who was less familiar with their skill sets. As a result, the pupil voice groups have a wider representation of different groups, ensuring greater diversity of representation.

Attendance at after-school clubs has been closely monitored to investigate why pupils from certain groups were underrepresented. Engagement has improved significantly as a result through targeted approaches to certain families which has benefitted from the

strong relationships that exist. The reintroduction of class TAs to support interventions has helped ensure consistency and reduce transitions. This is enhanced by TAs and Teachers planning together and tracking progress to ensure greater alignment between interventions and in-class learning.

The library has been refurbished to form a high-quality environment to promote reading. The full-time librarian helps children choose books and staffs the library at break and lunchtime to encourage reading for pleasure and create a calm, safe space. Each day starts with whole-school reading which allows intervention to occur at the same time. The National Tutoring programme is used to support reading progress and older prefects read with Year 5 pupils, which they enjoy doing. The school actively uses data to inform their next steps in all areas. For example, the reading initiative has been a response to low attainment levels, especially among PP pupils of whom 56% are classed as early readers when they join school in Year 5 but generally do not have additional needs.

The profile of EAL pupils has changed from those who were predominantly fluent in English to new arrivals who speak very little and may have minimal exposure to schooling. The EAL register, though it existed previously has a much higher profile with greater levels of detail. Flash Academy has been used to support general vocabulary and language development. Specific EAL training has been delivered and the EAL assessment framework is used to baseline language levels and create bespoke programmes. Pre-teaching is used to support access to the curriculum and software is used to map individual provision which is measured rigorously to ensure effectiveness. Pupils now make rapid progress and staff feel better supported. There are bilingual books in the school library to support access to reading and technology such as translating headphones are being investigated. Communication with parents has improved through coffee mornings, the use of case workers as translators, and communication with the children. An additional transition meeting was arranged at the school for those EAL families moving to the high school which enabled them to ask questions and gain a full understanding of the process. For parents who can't access IT hard copies of permission forms are sent home. As a result of the renewed emphasis on EAL attainment has increased significantly with 100% of pupils improving teacher- assessed reading scores.

The focus on oracy has provided a robust scaffold for the spoken word which has transferred from Literacy and Maths to all curriculum areas. There is a specific lesson given over to spoken language each week as well as it being threaded through the curriculum. This has benefitted all pupils including those who have EAL or additional needs by building confidence and promoting life skills. It has also supported the careers agenda that the school promotes. The sentence stems have helped lots of pupils who struggle to get started when they speak. The project has started to impact writing through a wider range of sentence openers and richer vocabulary. All year groups are planning and delivering an up to 2-minute presentation on a subject of their choice.

They have to rehearse what they do and critique their own performance and those of their friends. Staff confidence has grown through regular training and the impact is that pupil discussions are now more purposeful and much more frequent. Interactions have also become more widespread and active listening skills have improved as pupils now listen to respond more regularly. This is summed up by one teacher who said that they now "speak with each other rather than at each other".



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



Pupils enjoy their oracy as they use it in all lessons. One told me “It helps us build our sentence structure and improves our learning in English and other subjects.” Another commented, “It makes us happy because it is calm and relaxing and that helps me know I’m safe in school.” This proved to be a theme as a classmate added “oracy helps us in any lesson as we can think about how to improve things and it allows us calm time to take a break from the learning we have already done and think about how we can improve our work.” A fourth child observed “we have been recording our presentations so we can look at it and look at what to improve. Also, we are learning in a fun way and are intrigued to do it. It helps us inside and outside school because the sentence structure changes how we speak to people” Exploring a wider use of drama techniques, encouraging class debate, and engaging parents to support the initiative may further embed skills while enriching outcomes.

Westacre extends its focus beyond academic achievement, emphasizing personal growth and social responsibility. The school encourages students to develop their character, integrity, and sense of civic engagement, preparing them to become responsible and contributing members of society. Opportunities exist for pupils to become ambassadors for wellbeing, computing, eco-warriors, computing, music, etc. and each class has a librarian who returns books and liaises between the teacher and librarian. The pupils value this and like the fact they are given responsibilities. In this way the school empowers students to become global citizens, instilling in them a sense of responsibility for their community and the wider world.

The school stands out as a beacon of academic excellence and holistic education, committed to nurturing the intellectual, social, and emotional growth of its students. With a dedicated team of educators, a supportive school environment, and a commitment to well-rounded development, students are empowered to reach their full potential and become responsible, engaged responsible citizens. All stakeholders know they have the agency to have their voices heard and this is a powerful driver behind creating a high-performing culture which I have thoroughly enjoyed experiencing.

I continue to be firmly of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark to maintain its status as a Centre of Excellence. I therefore recommend that the school retains its Centre of Excellence status and is reviewed again in 12 months. The next review will look closely at how the school has interacted with its Inclusion Cluster and promoted continuing outreach. Evidence of Cluster working will underpin the capacity for the school to maintain its Centre of Excellence status.

Assessor: Mr. Cathal Lynch

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd