

WEST ROW PRIMARY ACADEMY

Situated in a small West Suffolk village on the edge of the Fens, West Row Primary Academy is part of Unity Schools Partnership and has been a CUSP partner school since summer 2023. Lis Close joined the school as Headteacher in January 2022.

Lis: West Row Primary School dates back to 1874 meaning we have a special standing within the village's history. This brings an added sense of responsibility to the community, which we uphold through our ethos, vision and values. We want all our children to feel happy, safe and secure, and to build strong academic foundations from which they can grow.

Our role as a school is to give every child the tools and skills they need to be successful on their individual journeys, whatever they might be. Being near to an air base, around ten percent of our children are from military families and children are often here for just a few short years of their education. We also have transient families within our community and, therefore, our school plays a vital role in helping children to settle quickly, build relationships and feel a real sense of belonging as part of Team West Row.

Three months after I joined the school, West Row was given its second 'requires improvement' judgement and the rebrokering process was initiated. That summer (2022), the combined Year 6 results were 11%. Over the course of the following year, while the rebrokering process was going on, we made some positive changes and combined Year 6 results increased to 22% by 2023, but this was still nowhere near where we wanted to be.



Late July 2023 was a real turning point for us. West Row officially joined Unity Schools Partnership and we held a staff PD day focused on implementing and delivering CUSP. We had already spent some time developing our visions and values, and as we adopted CUSP, we honed them to align very closely with the CUSP approach. Change of any kind inevitably brings some challenges but we embraced it, had fantastic support and gained the confidence to extend our use of CUSP, introducing 1:1 iPads and the iLearn digital strategy in our year 3-4 classes in spring 2024. Personally, I have particularly enjoyed introducing the CUSP literature spine. The books stand out for me as they're clearly carefully chosen and are such rich texts; they're just beautiful books to share with children.



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Lis Close
Principal

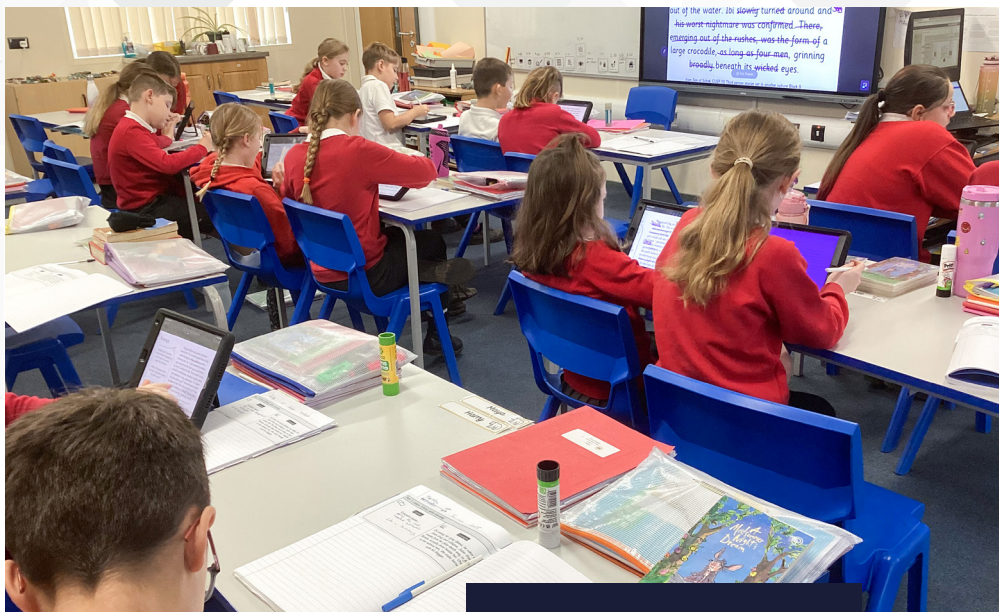




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Laura Guggiari
Deputy Principal



Using CUSP has given structure where our staff really needed it. It has provided the building blocks for us to create a school we are proud of. Not only have outcomes for our pupils soared but behaviour has improved too, which can only be brought about by having the right curriculum in place.

I'm incredibly proud of the improvements we have made over the past year. In just one academic year, our combined outcomes for Year 6 pupils have leapt from 22% to 63% - higher than the national average for the first time. I can't wait to see how West Row grows and improves from now on – one thing is for sure, CUSP will remain a key part of it.

Laura Guggiari is Deputy Principal and Head of Teaching and Learning.

Laura: CUSP has been fantastic for our school – pupils and teachers included. It brings consistency throughout subjects and across year groups, which supports subject leaders individually – and the school as a whole. The curriculum across each year group is well-sequenced and builds upon itself. Learning within subjects is well-ordered, and the

Thinking Hard tasks encourage depth of application and pitch expectations high.

The CUSP six part lesson structure has reduced children's cognitive load enabling them to focus on the lesson content, rather than the lesson processes. Children are able to talk about their learning with reference to the Knowledge Notes as a prompt. We have spent time training them to refer to the Knowledge Organiser and Note in the first instance – it has taken practise but it's a pleasure to see them becoming more independent in lessons.

For any school considering CUSP, I would say don't expect an off the peg scheme with presentations prepared for you; it's a far more powerful teaching tool than that. CUSP is a planned and sequenced curriculum that enables you to focus on the preparation of your lesson; the thinking through of the adaptations needed for the children in front of you. The hard thinking of how to effectively give your "explain" and "example" is absolutely necessary and the work you put in contextualising it will directly correspond to the learning outcomes your children will experience.

Laura's advice FOR CUSP SUCCESS

- Refer to the example planning when preparing lessons for the first time
- Remember that base slides are not the full lesson and require teacher preparation and adaptation
- Use the six phases of learning headings with the children so they get used to the expectations of each phase of the lesson

Find Out More

For an informal discussion about joining our partnership or to request a quote for your school or trust, please contact the CUSP operations team at cusp@unitysp.co.uk and we will be very happy to help.