

Delves Infant and Nursery School

Botany Road, Walsall WS5 4PU

Inspection dates

23–24 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher has quickly secured a tangible momentum of improvement in all areas of the school and gained the support of pupils, staff and parents since her appointment last year.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parent wrote, 'I think Delves is an excellent school. Since the arrival of the new headteacher Mrs Arnold, I feel that the school has gone from strength to strength; we are now well informed of what is happening within the school and as parents are more involved in our children's education'.
- Leaders, managers and teachers have a highly ambitious vision for the school, demonstrated by a relentless drive to ensure that no pupil is left behind. As a result, teaching, pupils' progress and outcomes are outstanding.
- Senior and middle leaders support the headteacher's vision effectively. Consequently, pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently significantly above the national average at the end of Year 2.
- All pupils are treated as individuals. As a result, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs are very well provided for and make excellent progress by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning, and enjoy coming to school and taking part in a broad range of extra-curricular activities.
- The early years provision is outstanding. From their starting points, children make excellent progress in Nursery and Reception classes and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Teaching is frequently outstanding and never less than good in all year groups, including the Nursery classes. Pupils leave the school exceptionally well prepared for Year 3.
- Governors are experienced and skilled. They approve the spending of school finances to improve pupils' outcomes. Governors use accurate and detailed information to hold leaders to account and support continued improvements across the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively developed by a highly creative and engaging curriculum.
- Strong teamwork is evident throughout the school. Staff work together effectively and are committed to supporting every pupil. Teaching assistants are well trained, highly skilled and make a clear difference to individual pupils and groups across the school.
- Staff know all pupils very well and place a high priority on maintaining excellent pupil attitudes and safety. Pupils feel very happy and always cared for as a result.
- The culture of high expectations, creativity and commitment to education permeates every level of this outstanding school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the outcomes for children in the early years by ensuring that systems are in place that:
 - enable groups (such as boys) to make faster progress from their starting points
 - increase the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception, especially in literacy and mathematics.

- Further improve pupils' attendance by continuing to work closely with parents to:
 - develop their understanding of the need to improve their child's attendance at school
 - reduce their child's unauthorised absences by taking leave and holidays outside term time.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher's determination and highly reflective leadership have enabled this school to improve swiftly in less than a year since her appointment. She has further developed the good systems that were in place to improve every aspect of the high-quality educational experiences provided for the pupils in this happy school. Changes such as leadership development, external checks and consistently high expectations in all aspects of the education provided have been critical in further improving teaching, learning and pupils' outcomes, for all groups across the school.
- Effective teamwork is a strong feature of this school. The commitment shown by teachers, teaching assistants, governors and all staff groups is outstanding. The headteacher receives exceptional support from the two assistant headteachers, who have led clear improvements to the curriculum, use of assessment information and provision for pupils with special educational needs or disability. Middle leaders join the headteacher and assistant headteachers to create an excellent team. They lead by example and work effectively to support all pupils and staff.
- Parents are very supportive of the education provided, and the direction and leadership of the school. Both the school's own survey and Parent View demonstrate overwhelmingly positive parental support and engagement. Numerous parents commented warmly on how well their children are cared for, the variety of opportunities the school provides for pupils and how well the school is led. One parent wrote, 'I think the management of the school is amazing from the head to all the teachers and the teaching assistants'.
- Leaders work closely with governors to set a strategic direction for the school and to check that planned improvements take place. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities ensure a consistent approach to improving pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Leaders have a strong capacity to take on increased responsibility and therefore further develop the skills of the leadership team.
- The leader for pupils with special educational needs or disability works very closely with the parent and family support adviser to ensure that vulnerable pupils get the support they need. They go out of their way to work with families to support their children's educational, personal and social development. For example, in partnership with a vicar who is also a governor, the school delivers well-attended parent support courses in a local church.
- Leaders at all levels, including in the early years, allow no room for complacency. Regular, detailed checks on teaching and individual pupil progress, linked to teachers' performance targets, have been used effectively to support teachers to improve their practice. This has led to continued improvements in teaching and better pupil outcomes, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The curriculum provides a broad range of excellent learning experiences and extra-curricular opportunities for all pupils. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is complemented by a well-organised, highly creative approach in all other subjects. The school has started the process of becoming a Unicef Rights Respecting School, which has already enhanced the curriculum and provided good opportunities for pupils to further develop their understanding of responsibility, global issues and different cultures.
- Leaders make good use of school improvement plans to set clear priorities and maintain regular and rigorous checks on whether actions taken have been effective or not. The headteacher has employed a range of external advisers to provide extra support and challenge to leaders, in the teaching of writing, for example. This demonstrates the highly reflective nature of the school and the relentless drive of leaders to improve every aspect of the school's provision.
- The local authority has worked with the school on a regular basis to support newly qualified teachers and check on the progress of improvements, for example. This support has not been challenging enough in the past, driving the school to seek additional external advice. However, the support provided by the local authority since the beginning of this academic year has improved due to greater focus and challenge.
- Leaders have used professional development for all staff and close work with local schools to develop the curriculum effectively and improve provision. Staff are asked to feed back on aspects of training, and leaders use this to further improve teaching and staff development.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to support eligible pupils. A range of strategies, including additional teaching and funded before- and after-school clubs, carefully focus on improving writing skills and supporting the social and emotional needs of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the outstanding progress of these pupils has led to outcomes in reading and mathematics being above those of other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally.

- Leaders are well supported by the office staff and business manager, who are highly organised and skilled and ensure that effective systems are in place to safeguard pupils, for example. This enables the leaders to focus on improving the welfare, experiences and quality of education for all pupils.
- Assemblies provide good opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, as well as celebrating their progress, conduct and commitment to learning. Staff actively promote and teach equality of opportunity by ensuring that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have special educational needs or disability or are from different cultures, are treated equally. Pupils have learned about democracy through voting for school council representatives and a visit to the Houses of Parliament as part of a 'send a child to school' initiative. These opportunities ensure that pupils carefully consider others and are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Additional government money to improve pupils' participation and ability in sport has been used very well. Pupils benefit from specialist sports coaching and teachers improve their skills by working alongside the coaches. Pupils and parents talk enthusiastically about the popular after-school clubs, which are free for all pupils. This broad range of opportunities helps pupils to understand competition and the importance of healthy lifestyles. The effective use of the sports grant has led to pupils' high activity levels at playtimes and increasing attendance levels at sports clubs.

■ **The governance of the school**

- Governors have a very good understanding of how well the school is performing in relation to other schools nationally. They use the high-quality pupil progress information provided by the headteacher and gathered themselves to ask challenging questions about the improvements to teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The Chair of the Governing Body is experienced and provides effective support to the school, while holding leaders to account at the same time. Governors have successfully overseen recent staffing changes, such as appointing an interim and then a permanent headteacher, while ensuring that the school has continued to improve pupils' outcomes.
- Governors support and challenge the school systematically. Minutes of meetings show that they hold all staff to account, especially senior and middle leaders, when checking the progress of particular pupil groups and school improvement plans. Governors are also fully informed about recent changes such as those to the national curriculum and assessment systems and are knowledgeable about how these have been implemented in school.
- Records show that governors have a precise understanding of how performance management is used to improve teaching and how this links to teachers' pay. Leaders and governors are prepared to make difficult decisions regarding staff performance, while at the same time awarding extra pay and progression for exceptional outcomes.
- Governors are skilled and prepared to use substantial school funds to make sure no pupils are left behind, for example, employing additional teachers and increasing teaching assistant hours to support disadvantaged and other pupils. Governors complete an annual skills audit to fully inform their training needs and further develop the effectiveness of the governing body.
- Governors check on how the pupil premium and sports monies are spent and they are kept regularly informed by senior leaders about the progress of eligible pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are very effective and there is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. All statutory requirements are met and arrangements to support vulnerable pupils and families are very effective. Staff training is up to date and includes preventing extremism and radicalisation in education, as well additional courses to support vulnerable families. Individual cases of concern are followed up thoroughly to ensure pupils are kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are usually outstanding and never less than good across the school. Records show that the proportion of good and outstanding teaching has increased, which is reinforced by the high-quality work in pupils' work books and around the school. Similarly, the school has a strong record of employing, developing and promoting newly qualified teachers. Nearly all pupils make more than nationally expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.

- Leaders and teachers ensure that no pupil is left behind. Teachers and teaching assistants lead a wide range of groups that support pupils' learning, and which are constantly reviewed in response to pupils' needs. Parents appreciate this commitment, and support it by enabling their children to access before- and after-school additional reading and writing provision. As a result, the pupils who access this additional provision, including vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs, catch up rapidly.
- Teachers and teaching assistants create a very positive climate for learning through focused teaching and effective questioning and by encouraging pupils' confidence. Consequently, pupils clearly enjoy school, take responsibility for their learning and make excellent progress. For example, pupils were observed independently collecting resources available to support their learning in mathematics.
- The teaching of mathematics is outstanding, with high standards in this subject continuing to improve. Current assessment information and work seen in pupils' books show that pupils are continuing to make very strong progress. The school has bought an online mathematics resource, which is used effectively in school to develop and broaden pupils' mathematical skills. Pupils can also access the resource at home, with their progress and efforts celebrated in school.
- The teaching of phonics and reading is of very high quality. Staff deliver effective lessons to well-organised groups, leading to rapid gains in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Teaching assistants provide high-quality support to both individuals and small groups, such as those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs, to help them progress as much as other pupils in reading. Leaders have put extra provision in place for those pupils who do not read at home as much as others, so that these pupils are not left behind.
- Leaders use assessment information exceptionally well to focus on improving writing for specific groups, such as the most-able pupils. As a result, the teaching of writing and pupils' outcomes have continued to improve. Pupils' work books demonstrate a range of writing opportunities, often linked with topics such as 'Around the World' and 'A Bug's Life'. As a result of very effective teaching and feedback to pupils, the quality of writing has rapidly improved, especially for girls and the most-able pupils. Leaders have already started work to further improve boys' writing.
- Teaching assistants are very well trained and deployed efficiently. They are keen to further develop their skills. They provide very effective support for a range of pupils, in lessons, and before and after school. They support pupils' rapid progress and personal development, and help fill the gaps in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Staff go the extra mile to support individual pupils and families, as they are determined that no pupil will be left behind.
- Parents are very appreciative of the measures staff take to ensure that pupils' needs are met quickly and thoroughly. For example, parents said, 'recently the staff developed innovative solutions to my daughter's refusal to eat and this improved her behaviour enormously' and 'my daughter has come on so much now. She hates holidays because she loves school so much'.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils' confidence and physical and emotional well-being are carefully nurtured. Consequently, pupils have good self-awareness about their learning and confidently take learning risks. They also discuss topics, such as caring for nature, in a mature and reasoned way.
- Pupils are fully aware of how to keep themselves and others safe. They are knowledgeable about the dangers associated with the internet. Pupils say that they feel safe because adults are always there to help them if needed.
- Staff make excellent use of the Forest School area to develop pupils' personal, social, creative and language skills. Significant funding has been used to develop and maintain this well-resourced and engaging learning area. Year 1 pupils were observed using natural resources to create art in the style of Andy Goldsworthy and using their phonics skills to correctly write words such as 'branch'.
- Pupils are keen to come to school because there is a very positive atmosphere which promotes learning and they feel safe. The school and an educational welfare officer work hard with families to promote and improve attendance.
- Leaders use measures such as meetings with the headteacher and fines to send a strong message to parents that taking pupils out of school for leave or holidays during term time is not acceptable, unless in very exceptional circumstances. However, some parents have chosen to ignore these messages and continue to take their children out of school in term time. Consequently, pupil attendance rates have been

below the national average for the past three years. However, as a result of determined work and new measures such as issuing all parents with clear, half-termly updates on their child's attendance, rates for all pupil groups have risen quickly since September and are now in line with the national average.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Their courtesy and conduct around the school and in lessons are exemplary and they have very positive attitudes towards each other. Pupils show great respect to all adults at all times of the day.
- Pupils clearly enjoy lessons and respond quickly to adults' questions and prompts. They move sensibly between activities in lessons and work thoughtfully during group work, carefully considering each other's views and ideas.
- All staff have high expectations, promote very good behaviour and manage pupils' needs well. As a result, disruptions to lessons are extremely rare. The overwhelming majority of parents agree that the school ensures pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils say that bullying 'doesn't happen here'. They say that playground problems are very rare and are nearly always resolved by them, but staff are always on hand if needed.
- The school analyses behaviour logs carefully and follows up any concerns. Checks on these records show that behaviour incidents are rare. The school works very closely with parents and external agencies to support the emotional, social and behavioural needs of individual pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Children enter the school with skills that are broadly below those typical for their age, especially in speech and language. They leave Year 2 with skills that are significantly above the national average.
- Pupils in every year group achieve very well in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result of additional help and high-quality support, disadvantaged pupils make more progress in reading, writing and mathematics than other pupils nationally. All pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils' outcomes at the end of Year 2 have been significantly above the national average in all areas for the last three years. Work in pupils' books and the school's assessment information demonstrate that pupils are working at a very high standard as they continue to make outstanding progress.
- Children read very well. The high-quality teaching of phonics has resulted in improved teaching and pupil outcomes in this area. Consequently, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check has been above the national average for the last two years. The small number of pupils who did not pass the phonics check in Year 1 catch up securely in Year 2 as a result of very effective support and focused teaching.
- Outcomes by the end of Year 2 have continued to improve and are consistently above the national average in all subjects. For example, pupils have good mathematical skills and are able to use a range of information to solve number problems confidently. By the time they leave the school, pupils have made outstanding progress and nearly all pupils have above-average skills in reading, writing and mathematics. This is a result of strong teaching in every year group.
- All pupils are treated as individuals and leaders' pursuit of excellent standards, teaching and behaviour ensures that no one is left behind. This approach means that the provision for pupils with special educational needs or disability is highly effective and their needs are fully met. Good-quality internal and external support has resulted in a highly focused approach to support progress for pupils with special educational needs and those who need additional help to achieve well. As a result of this, the achievement for these pupils at the end of Year 1 and Year 2 has shown a steady improvement and is now closer to that of other pupils in school.
- Disadvantaged pupils also achieve well. National assessments and work in pupils' work books indicate that across all year groups, these pupils are very well supported and achieve above other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Targeted support and close monitoring have resulted in the closure of the gap between disadvantaged and other pupils in the school. In 2015, for example, disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 achieved above both other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics.
- The attainment of the most-able pupils has been significantly above the national average in writing at the end of Year 2 for at least the last three years. These pupils are able to demonstrate their effective use of well-developed skills and their high engagement in writing. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieve above age-related expectations is higher than the national average in writing and in line with the

national average in reading and mathematics.

- The school goes out of its way to ensure that all pupils are treated equally and that social skills are fully developed. Pupils listen very carefully to each other and to all staff. As a result of excellent attitudes to learning and the high expectations set by the school, pupils are very successfully prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- The leadership of the early years foundation stage is outstanding. Leaders work closely together to constantly improve the provision. Nursery and Reception staff systematically check how children improve their skills through play, and modify activities according to the children's needs and interests. The classrooms are well equipped and staff make good use of the outside learning areas.
- The Nursery provision is a warm, happy and nurturing atmosphere for children. Adults provide well-directed support and encourage children's independence right from the start. Consequently, this provision enables the vast majority of children to progress well and be well prepared for Reception.
- The Nursery staff are highly effective at picking up and addressing any early concerns about young children's learning and development. During the inspection, Nursery staff were seen engaging effectively both with individuals and small groups. An external speech and language therapist was also observing a child in the classroom as a result of an early referral from the school.
- Nearly all Nursery children transfer into Reception. They make an excellent start in both Nursery and Reception as a result of consistently high expectations and engaging teaching which is at least good. This is firmly supported by inspection evidence, school records, current assessment information and the rapid progress seen in children's work books.
- Leaders have started work to further improve children's outcomes in the early years, especially for boys and in literacy and mathematics. Children's achievement by the end of the Reception Year has improved to be in line with the national average for all groups, including for disadvantaged children. Recently published assessment information also shows that particular improvements have been made in pupils' physical, language and communication skills.
- Children's love of learning is effectively promoted because of the high-quality teaching and engaging learning environments. Exciting learning planned by adults, such as a range of activities based on *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, gains children's interest and is well matched to their needs. High expectations and quickly established learning, social and communication routines are key features of the success of the early years provision.
- Adults promote early reading skills through daily phonics sessions. Children's active participation helps to develop their enjoyment in learning letters and the sounds they make. Consequently, children make very effective progress in their communication, language and literacy skills by the end of Reception. Owing to the high-quality adult input and established routines, children are able to show great enthusiasm as they are learning and then quickly stop and listen when required.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding as a result of high expectations, high-quality provision and an individualised approach taken by the school. Adults ensure that children know how to be safe and whom they can talk to if they need help. Whether learning indoors or outdoors, children behave in ways that keep them happy and safe.
- Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their child's learning through maintaining good communication with the school. For example, parents have the opportunity to contribute to their child's learning journey regularly, and attendance at parent workshops delivered by the school is high.
- High-quality teaching and support and well-planned learning activities enable children to make excellent progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, they are well prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	104150
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10001208

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant and Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maureen Woodcock MBE
Headteacher	Amanda Arnold
Telephone number	01922 720754
Website	www.delvesinfantschool.co.uk
Email address	postbox@delvesinfantschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 September 2010

Information about this school

- Delves Infant and Nursery School is larger than most infant schools.
- The current headteacher joined the school in April 2015.
- Children in the Nursery classes attend part time.
- Children in the Reception classes attend full time.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are twice that of other schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is just above the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible to receive free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 17 lessons or part lessons, including examples of teaching in every year group. Six of these lesson observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or one of the assistant headteachers. The lead inspector, headteacher and one of the assistant headteachers also jointly completed a learning walk throughout the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, middle leaders and governors. In addition, a meeting was held with a representative from the local authority and a privately employed educational consultant, who both work with the school.
- The inspection team looked at pupils' books in a range of subjects to establish the progress and quality of their work over time.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils as well as individual pupils during their lessons and at playtimes to find out their views about the school, and 10 pupils completed Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.
- Informal discussions were held with parents to gauge their views of the school. The inspector took account of 49 recent responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the comments made.
- The inspection team received 27 online responses to the staff questionnaire and their views were taken into account.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and observed their behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's plans for improvement, external monitoring reports, records of checks made by leaders, and information on pupils' progress and outcomes. They also scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Stuart Bellworthy, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gareth Morgan	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Evans	Ofsted Inspector
Patrick Amieli	Ofsted Inspector

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