School report

Wychall Primary School
Middle Field Road, Northfield, Birmingham, West Midlands B31 3EH

Inspection dates
8–9 November 2017

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Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching. Pupils do not make strong enough progress as they move through the school and as a result, pupils’ outcomes, particularly in reading and mathematics, are not high enough by the time they leave the school in Year 6.

- Teachers’ expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are not high enough, especially for the most able pupils. Too few pupils reach the higher standards at the end of key stage 2. Teachers do not ensure that basic errors in spelling are identified in pupils’ work.

- There is a lack of a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. This hampers pupils’ progress in reading.

- Leaders, including governors, have not ensured that funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to improve outcomes for these pupils.

- Leaders do not use assessment information effectively to monitor the progress that pupils are making. The assessment systems that the school has in place do not support teachers in being fully accurate in their judgements on pupils’ progress.

- Leader’s evaluations of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils’ learning are not fully accurate. This hinders leaders’ efforts to ensure that teaching is consistently at least good.

- Governors have not ensured that they have a clear and accurate view of the quality of teaching. As a result, they have not been in a sufficiently strong position to hold leaders to account for pupils’ progress. Governors have not ensured that the school website contains all the necessary information.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well and show respect and care for each other. Support for pupils with complex and challenging behaviour is effective in ensuring that they can participate fully in school life.

- Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well.

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is good. As a result, they make good progress.

- The headteacher’s passion and commitment to ensuring that pupils’ safety and well-being is at the heart of the schools’ work results in pupils feeling safe and extremely well protected.
Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is good or better, and improve the rates of progress for pupils by:
  - ensuring that all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and set work that is accurately matched to their abilities, especially for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged
  - ensuring that all teachers identify frequent and common errors in pupils’ work and insist upon accuracy in spelling
  - ensuring that teachers, including in the early years provision, are accurate in their assessments of pupils’ progress and use this information to adapt their planning to match the needs of different pupils
  - ensuring that teachers and other staff, including in the early years provision, follow a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics to support pupils in their reading and writing.

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that all leaders make greater use of the assessment information that the school holds to analyse the impact of teaching on particular groups of pupils
  - further developing monitoring and evaluation systems so that that information is used to identify where and how teaching can be improved
  - improving provision for disadvantaged pupils by accurately implementing actions that address pupils’ specific barriers to learning.

- Improve governance of the school by ensuring that governors:
  - have a secure and accurate understanding of how pupils are achieving and use this information to hold leaders to account
  - make sure that pupil premium funding is used effectively to diminish difference in outcomes between those of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally
  - make sure that the school website complies with statutory requirements.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school’s use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
Leaders have not, over time, been successful in ensuring that all teaching is of a sufficiently high quality to improve rates of progress for pupils. The headteacher has a deeply-held and passionate belief that pupils need to feel safe in school if they are to succeed and this commitment is shared by all staff. This results in a caring and harmonious community where pupils feel valued and supported in their emotional and social development. However, there has not been a sufficient focus on identifying how teaching can improve and this has adversely affected attempts to improve pupils’ outcomes.

While the recent appointment of the deputy headteacher has helped to strengthen leadership following the departure of other senior leaders to posts in other schools, leaders have not been fully accurate in their evaluation of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils’ learning. This has meant that necessary changes in aspects of teaching have not taken place with enough urgency. Leaders are extremely open to support and advice and are now working with the multi-academy trust and a school improvement partner to identify what action needs to be taken. However, many changes are at the early stages of implementation and have not yet had sufficient time to have the required impact on the quality of teaching across the school.

Leaders do not use the assessment information that is gathered to effectively identify if pupils are making rapid enough progress to improve their levels of attainment. Leaders demonstrated an awareness during the inspection that they needed to refine assessment systems further to ensure that teachers were fully accurate in their assessments of pupils’ progress and to allow for detailed analysis of the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils. They recognise that this will allow them to hold teachers more effectively to account for the outcomes of pupils.

Leaders have not ensured that the pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. They have recently carried out an audit of the particular barriers to learning that face these pupils but have not as yet accurately matched support to their particular needs. While funding has been used to ensure that all pupils can access all aspects of school life, there has not been a sufficiently sharp and well-defined approach to identifying what will have the greatest impact on diminishing differences in outcomes for these pupils against others nationally.

Leaders have established systems in place for managing teachers’ performance that are based firmly on the teachers’ standards. Leaders have used these systems appropriately to identify where teaching has given particular concern.

Teachers and other staff value the professional development opportunities that leaders put in place. For example, teachers have benefited from the opportunity to visit other schools to observe the teaching of mathematics. This has helped to improve teachers’ confidence and ability in teaching computational skills. However, not all teaching is fully effective in this subject yet.
Newly qualified teachers are well supported in their professional development. Leaders ensure that they understand the policies and practices of the school and work with them to identify appropriate targets for improvement.

Leaders have developed a curriculum that is broad and balanced and of interest and relevance to the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to make links between subjects through a range of topics such as ‘Reach for the Stars’ and ‘Wonderful World’. Pupils’ learning is enhanced through visits and trips, including to the Black Country Museum and a Roman villa. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 6 undertake residential trips that promote teamwork and resilience. Pupils are actively involved in the planning of these trips and are able to apply mathematical skills in setting up a budget. Pupils spoke positively to inspectors about the clubs that the school offers, including a choir and gardening activities.

Good use is made of specialist staff to lead teaching in some subject areas, including physical education and modern foreign languages. All pupils from Year 1 upwards learn Spanish. During the inspection, pupils in key stage 1 were observed responding positively in a Spanish lesson that helped them develop their vocabulary and confidence in speaking a different language.

The additional sports funding is used effectively to ensure that pupils receive high-quality teaching in physical education and to provide a wide range of competitive sports opportunities. Specialist sports coaches lead lessons alongside teachers and this helps school staff to develop confidence and competence in this area of the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on how they can maintain a healthy lifestyle and to raise their expectations of what they can achieve. For example, a disabled motivational speaker recently led an assembly for pupils with a theme of ‘You Can Do It’. This helped pupils appreciate the achievements of others and increased their awareness of everyone’s potential.

Leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good. Leaders ensure that the needs of these pupils are accurately and swiftly identified. Additional funding is used effectively to provide appropriate support, including through outside agencies, such as speech and language therapists, autism support and educational psychologists.

Pupils are very well supported in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies are used to enable pupils to develop an understanding of different religions and beliefs and to appreciate why a person’s faith is of great importance and relevance. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and understand and demonstrate the need for tolerance and respect. All pupils in school have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and this helps in their cultural development. Pupils form strong links with the wider community, including local homes for the elderly.

The multi-academy trust is aware that there is a need for improvement in school and have provided opportunities for school leaders to work alongside other good or outstanding schools to develop their leadership skills. Effective use is made of a school improvement partner who is supporting leaders in developing their monitoring and evaluation skills. The trust recognise that there is more work to do in this area.
Governance of the school

- Governors have not over time ensured that they have a sufficiently detailed and accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils’ learning. They have not focused enough on the progress that pupils are making as they move through the school. This has meant that they have not been in a strong enough position to understand how pupils at the school achieve compared with other pupils nationally. They have been too accepting of the information provided to them by school leaders. This has meant their role in challenging leaders to improve has not been rigorous enough.

- Governors have made recent changes to their committee structures and have strengthened their membership through the appointment of new governors. During the inspection, governors showed that they are beginning to identify how they can improve their effectiveness. Governors value the support that they receive from the multi-academy trust and are open to the need for a review of governance.

- Governors have not ensured that the school meets statutory requirements on the information that is available in the website. For example, there is no information about how the pupil premium is being used or its impact on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Governors are not in a sufficiently strong position to understand how additional funding impacts on the pupils that it is intended for.

- Governors have a good understanding of the social context of the school and the difficulties faced by many parents and their children. They place a high priority on making sure that pupils are provided with a nurturing and caring environment in school. Governors are well informed and knowledgeable about the safeguarding arrangements in school and make regular checks to ensure that this aspect of the school’s work is effective and well managed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- There is an extremely strong culture of keeping pupils safe at the school that underpins the work that all staff do. Pupils’ safety and well-being is of paramount importance. The school’s mission statement of ‘Safe, secure, successful’ is displayed on pupils’ uniforms and around the building. This message is translated into the ethos of the school and is understood and appreciated by parents, their children and members of staff.

- The headteacher is tenacious and unrelenting in protecting vulnerable and at-risk pupils. She, together with other leaders, is insistent that outside agencies take appropriate action when a pupil needs support. Many families face social difficulties and this adversely impacts on the mental health of some pupils. Support for these pupils is of high quality and effective. The headteacher has ensured that all members of staff are provided with regular training on how to identify signs of potential abuse, are clear in how to record and report any concerns and understand fully their responsibilities. For example, all staff have received training on how to protect pupils from the threat of extremism and radicalisation.
The school’s pastoral team work extremely effectively together to provide support and advice to parents and their children. They use their expertise to good effect to ensure that there is a nurturing environment in school.

The school site is a safe place with secure entrances and exits. Suitable checks are made on visitors and staff to make sure they do not pose a risk to pupils.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Requires improvement**

- Teaching is not consistently good across the school. Teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve and at times set work that is not well matched to the different abilities of the pupils. As a result, pupils do not make enough progress, especially in reading and mathematics. Too often the same tasks are set for all pupils. This means that some pupils struggle to complete the work.

- Teachers do not ensure that the level of challenge is sufficiently high for the most able pupils. Pupils spoken to during the inspection commented that at times they found the work too easy.

- The teaching of phonics is not effective. There is a lack of a whole-school, systematic approach to this aspect of reading and writing. Some staff are not secure in modelling the correct sounds that letters make when grouped together. This causes confusion for some pupils. Teachers and other staff do not effectively ensure that pupils apply their phonics knowledge in learning how to correctly spell words. Leaders have rightly recognised that this is a priority for the school and have formulated plans that identify the actions they intend to take. However, this development work has not been fully implemented as yet and it is too early to judge what the impact will be.

- Teachers do not ensure that they identify errors in commonly used words and as a result pupils continue making the same mistakes. There are too many occasions when teachers and other staff are not accurate in their own spelling of words.

- Opportunities have been developed for teachers to work alongside other staff from schools in the multi-academy trust to compare their assessments. However, evidence gathered during the inspection showed that teacher’s assessments are not fully accurate on too many occasions and are at times over-optimistic. This means that teachers are not in a strong enough position to plan work that builds on pupils’ previous learning.

- There has been an improvement in the teaching of mathematics over the past year. There is now a more consistent approach to the teaching of computational activities, such as addition and division. There is increasing evidence that pupils are applying their skills and knowledge to problem-solving using reasoning. However, this is not yet fully embedded and there are still inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

- Teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to write, including in extended pieces of work. Pupils are taught grammatical skills and punctuation and are encouraged to develop a cursive style of handwriting. While this area of teaching results in higher outcomes by the time pupils leave the school, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not securely high enough.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are provided with good support that is well matched to their individual needs. Teaching assistants work well alongside these pupils.
and provide an appropriate balance of guidance and opportunities for pupils to undertake independent work. They carefully explain how tasks can be undertaken and break activities down into smaller stages.

- Where teaching is particularly effective, teachers use questioning well to require pupils to think deeply and justify their answers. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on World War II, pupils provided well-considered answers about the reasons for the bombing of Coventry that showed they understood the strategic importance of the city in the war effort.

**Personal development, behaviour and welfare**  
Good

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils are proud of their school and feel valued and respected. They are polite and well mannered. For example, at lunchtime the dining rooms are calm and orderly places where pupils display positive attitudes towards each other. Pupils who show particularly good manners and attitudes are rewarded with the opportunity to sit at a ‘special’ table with table clothes and flowers.

- Relationships between adults and pupils are positive across the school. Adults take the time to talk to pupils and explain what is expected of them. As a result, pupils are accepting of the rules that are in place and understand that they are there for the benefit of all members of the school community.

- Pupils with particular emotional and social needs are extremely well supported. Trained and skilled staff work in the nurture rooms with small groups of pupils and help develop their self-esteem and ability to cope within the classrooms. Pupils are encouraged to show consideration for others and this is fostered extremely well through their involvement and care for the school nurture dog, ‘Barney’.

- Pupils are encouraged and supported to take on responsibility. For example, pupils value the opportunity to be prefects and peer mentors and understand that these roles are awarded as a recognition of personal skills and trustworthiness. During the inspection, in an assembly the school’s recently established ‘Super Safeguarding Team’ eloquently explained their role in helping extend this aspect of the school’s work.

- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a wide range of situations. They understand the dangers that the use of the internet can pose and recognise the threat of cyber-bullying. Pupils are provided with regular updates, including from the NSPCC, on aspects of personal safety. Pupils spoken to during the inspection identified why there are regular fire practices in school and the rigour that is shown by staff on these occasions.

- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is and the impact it can have on others. Pupils say that bullying does not occur often in school and when it does it is dealt with well by adults. They know that adults will listen to their concerns and were emphatic that the headteacher was available as a reliable and accessible point of contact.
**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- The very large majority of pupils are well behaved and demonstrate positive attitudes both inside and outside the classrooms. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, the zoned playgrounds provide spaces for pupils to engage in active play or to have quiet places to talk to their friends.

- Pupils move sensibly around the school site. They walk within the corridors and hold doors open for each other and for adults. They understand the need to listen when other people are talking.

- A small number of pupils display very challenging behaviour and other pupils are aware that their needs are addressed appropriately by staff. The school’s inclusive ethos helps to ensure that these pupils are able to access their learning.

- Attendance has been stubbornly below the national average over recent years. This is due to a small number of parents who have not recognised the need to ensure that their children attend regularly and on time. The school works hard with all parents to promote good attendance and uses a wide range of approaches. The recent appointment of an attendance officer has added to the effectiveness of the measures that are in place. As a result, attendance this school year has risen and is currently only slightly below the national average.

- At times, when teaching is less engaging, the attention of some pupils can wander and they lose focus. Teachers and other staff are usually quick and successful in dealing with any inappropriate behaviour.

**Outcomes for pupils**

**Requires improvement**

- Outcomes require improvement. Pupils do not make consistently good progress as they move through the school. Evidence gathered during the inspection from scrutiny of pupils’ work, the school’s assessment information and observations in lessons show that current pupils are not making sufficient progress. Too many pupils are not attaining the standards expected for their age by the time they leave the school in Year 6.

- In 2017 the progress of Year 6 pupils in both reading and mathematics was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils that attained the expected standard in these subjects and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling was also well below the national average. Pupils’ attainment and progress in writing was broadly in line with the national average.

- Too few of the most able pupils in school attain the higher standards by the time they leave the school. This is because teachers do not set tasks that are sufficiently demanding and challenging. Outcomes for the most able pupils in key stage 1 are starting to improve but this improvement is not consistently replicated across the school.

- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils require improvement. These pupils make similar progress to their classmates in school and consequently attain at similar levels.
Differences in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, are not diminishing rapidly enough.

- In 2017 the proportion of pupils that attained the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was below the national average. This had also been the case in 2016. The lack of a whole-school, systematic approach to the teaching of phonics hinders the progress that pupils make in early reading and writing.

- Outcomes for pupils in key stage 1 had improved in 2017 and were broadly in line with the national average in all subjects. There are signs of improvement in pupils’ attainment, especially in writing, but at present this is not consistent across all classes and year groups in school.

- Pupils with SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points in school. Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support and adapt tasks well to the individual needs of the pupils. As a result, gaps in learning for these pupils are narrowing well.

- There are no significant gaps in outcomes between pupils from different ethnic groups.

**Early years provision**

**Requires improvement**

- Children’s progress across the early years provision has been variable over recent years. While there is some good teaching, particularly in the Nursery class, the same inconsistencies in the quality of teaching that are present elsewhere in the school are evident in the early years provision. As a result, outcomes are still not yet securely good.

- The majority of children start in school with skills and knowledge that are below those that are typical for their age, with some well below. Many children have limited communication and language skills when they start in the Nursery class. Teachers and other adults focus on providing pupils with opportunities to develop their spoken language and encourage them to answer questions in simple sentences.

- The teaching of phonics is a weakness in the early years provision. Not all staff are secure in accurately modelling sounds for children and this affects children’s early reading and writing development. Leaders recognise that this is an issue and are developing plans to make improvements. However, as yet this has not been successfully addressed.

- There has been a recent change in leadership of the early years provision. While leaders are ambitious to ensure that provision is well matched to the specific needs of the children, monitoring and evaluation systems are not yet firmly established. Leaders recognise the positive impact that observing good practice in other schools and settings will have on improving teaching and learning opportunities for the children at Wychall Primary School and are developing opportunities for this to occur.

- Leaders have been successful in developing a stimulating, exciting and well-resourced learning environment in both the indoor and outdoor areas. Children are provided with a very wide range of activities to choose from. At times, teachers and other adults do not provide enough direction to children to ensure that the activities match the specific needs and abilities of the individuals. This slows progress for some children.
Teachers’ use of assessment is not fully effective to allow them to gain a secure understanding of each child’s abilities and needs. Initial assessments when children start in the Reception classes are not carried out swiftly enough to enable staff to match tasks to the individual needs and abilities of the children.

There is the same high focus in the early years provision on safeguarding and well-being as elsewhere in the school. As a result, children are safe and secure. Children’s behaviour is consistently good and they cooperate well with each other, taking turns and listening to what other people say.

Relationships between adults and children are strong and supportive. All staff have a good awareness of the children’s social and emotional needs and this helps to provide a nurturing and calm environment where children feel valued.

Parents are extremely positive about the way that they are involved in their children’s early education. Staff have run workshops for parents on mathematics and communication and these opportunities are valued and appreciated.

There are good links in place with a wide range of outside agencies, including behavioural support and speech therapists. Leaders ensure that the needs of any children with SEN and/or disabilities are quickly identified and appropriate action is taken. Additional funding is used to ensure that disadvantaged children are able to participate fully in school life.
School details

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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.

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<td>Chair</td>
<td>Dave Peters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Headteacher</td>
<td>Therese Connell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone number</td>
<td>0121 464 4255</td>
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<td>Website</td>
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Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupil premium funding and sports funding.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about annual reports and accounts, equality objectives and exclusion arrangements.
- Wychall Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above that in most schools. The largest minority group are of Black or Black British heritage.
There are two classes in each year group and a Nursery class.

The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 6.

The school is part of the drb Ignite Multi-Academy Trust. The local governing body oversees the academy’s work. The school opened as an academy on 1 October 2015. When its predecessor school, Wychall Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, in June 2013, it was judged to be good.

The headteacher is retiring from the school at the end of December 2017. A new headteacher has been appointed to take up the role in January 2018. The deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2017. Three other senior leaders left the school in July 2017 to take up posts in other schools. A number of teaching posts are currently being covered by temporary staff.
Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils’ learning in 25 lessons or parts of lessons.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils’ books and listened to pupils read. They met with a group of pupils. The inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour at lunch and breaktimes, as well as in lessons. An inspector observed an assembly.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school’s checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance, records of how teaching is managed and the school improvement plans.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the early years leaders and middle leaders. The lead inspector met with two members of the governing body, including the vice-chair of the governing body, and with two representatives from the drb Ignite Multi Academy Trust. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner who has been working with the school on behalf of the drb Ignite Multi Academy Trust.
- There were too few responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, for the results to be considered. Inspectors talked to parents at the start of the school day. They considered the 18 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 31 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adam Hewett, lead inspector</td>
<td>Her Majesty's Inspector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Draper</td>
<td>Ofsted Inspector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracey Kneale CBE</td>
<td>Ofsted Inspector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Orgill</td>
<td>Ofsted Inspector</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collette Higgins</td>
<td>Ofsted Inspector</td>
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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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