

Inspection of Wychall Primary School

Middle Field Road, Northfield, Birmingham, West Midlands B31 3EH

Inspection dates: 11–12 February 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have transformed this school. Pupils are happy and want to come to school. They are hungry to learn and so attend regularly. Leaders have high expectations for them. Pupils are now learning and remembering more in reading, writing and mathematics. This was reflected in their improved Year 6 test results in 2019. Their knowledge about precipitation and evaporation in geography is exceptionally high. Pupils enjoyed visiting the Royal Air Force Cosford Museum as part of their Battle of Britain topic. All pupils have digital skipping ropes, so they can check their exercise rates. However, their understanding in religious education (RE) is limited.

Behaviour is much improved. Pupils created Wychall's 'golden charter', using the articles within the United Nations convention on the rights of the child. The school's motto is 'Safe, secure and successful'. Pupils reported that they feel safe in school. Pupils act as 'super safeguarding kids'. They proudly support their peers in staying safe. Pupils confirmed that there is little bullying in school. When it occurs, there is always an adult or pupil who can help to sort it out.

Information provided by the school does not make their leadership, trust and governance structure clear enough to parents.

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

Leaders have created a calm environment in early years, where children thrive through taking part in a well-planned sequence of activities. Children enjoyed their trip to the town hall and meeting members of the emergency services. Children start to learn to read early on in Reception. Many have already begun to learn their letters and sounds in Nursery. The books they read are well matched to the letters and sounds they know.

Leaders promote pupils' love of reading. It is at the heart of the curriculum, along with writing. Story time has a high profile throughout the school. Teachers plan lessons sequentially. They make sure that pupils can access more challenging texts progressively, as well as having extensive opportunities for reading and writing. Pupils can access a range of books online and through the library. Teachers' planning in history and geography is designed so that pupils can apply the reading and writing skills they have developed in English. This helps them to learn and remember more. The books they read are carefully linked to other subjects and topics they are studying.

Leaders have high ambitions for pupils in mathematics. Teachers set out clearly their expectations of what pupils will learn and when in each year group. These are applied consistently, together with the key vocabulary pupils are expected to learn. Opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as physical education (PE), are less well developed.

Leaders have fully implemented their curriculum plans in geography, history, design and technology, and art. The geography curriculum has been carefully planned as a template for other subjects to follow. It is planned so that pupils revisit themes in greater depth. It links carefully with other subjects to ensure that concepts are taught in an appropriate order. For example, pupils learned map skills and locations in Europe before starting on their history topic of the Battle of Britain.

Curriculum plans in RE, PE, music, French and computing have yet to be implemented. As a result, pupils' knowledge of major faiths is limited. Older pupils have few opportunities to write sentences and paragraphs in French.

Leaders meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. These pupils are fully included in subject lessons. Leaders address speech and language needs early in Reception and key stage 1 so that pupils are able to access learning in key stage 2.

The school's success in raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics has ensured that disadvantaged pupils are catching up with other pupils nationally.

Leaders have worked hard to improve pupils' attendance, which is rapidly improving. Behaviour is of a high standard, and exclusions are falling.

Pupils can debate issues. They voted for the school council and to become 'super safeguarding kids'. Existing members shortlist pupil applications and conduct interviews. They enjoy a wide range of additional curriculum activities including the choir, residential trips and fund-raising for charities.

Leaders are mindful of reducing staff workload. Staff appreciate this, as reflected in the comment, 'I feel I am given the time and support to do my job effectively.'

Trustees hold leaders stringently to account. Some of the statutory information that the school shares with parents lacks clarity. Most parents who responded to surveys were positive about the school. Some were understandably confused by the leadership, trust and governance structure, given the conflicting information published on the school's website.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders keep pupils safe in school. They teach pupils about how to keep themselves safe out of school. Referrals are made promptly and records kept securely. Leaders and teachers are well trained for their roles.

Many pupils spoken to aspire to be 'super safeguarding kids'. They know what to do in potentially dangerous online situations. If they post a photograph of themselves on social media, they know it can still be accessed, even if they delete it.

The school's 'model' safeguarding policy does not reflect its governance structure accurately.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The way in which the trust, leadership and governance structure is communicated, including to parents, is not clear. Safeguarding and complaints policies on the website state that parental concerns should be referred to 'the governing body' after raising them with 'senior leaders' in the first instance. The 'executive governance group' (EGG), despite its title, does not have the function of a governing body. This has caused confusion for parents. The roles of the executive headteacher and acting headteacher are not clear to some parents either. This lack of clarity in statutory information has had an impact on the school's engagement with parents, as they do not know who to turn to if they have an issue that needs addressing. Leaders and the trust board should ensure that there is a clear, transparent leadership and governance structure. This should be clearly communicated, so that parents know the route to follow when raising concerns. They should ensure that all information on the school and trust websites and all policies reflect this structure consistently. The trust should rename the EGG as a matter of urgency to avoid further confusion and to reflect the fact that it is not the governing body.
- Leaders have well-developed intentions for the curriculum in RE, PE, French, music and computing, but these plans have not been fully implemented yet. This means that pupils do not learn as well in these subjects as they do in others because the curriculum is not as carefully sequenced. Leaders should ensure that the planned improvements are implemented as quickly as possible, so that the quality of education in these subjects matches the very high standards set in other subjects such as geography.
- Leaders have successfully ensured that pupils can apply their reading and writing skills in other subjects, especially history and geography. However, pupils do not get the same opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as PE. This results in missed opportunities for pupils to deepen their learning. Leaders should ensure that pupils have good opportunities to practise their mathematical skills in range of subjects.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	142386
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10122470
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	434
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Sheldon
Executive headteacher	Dominic Davis
Acting head of school	Nick Lamorte
Website	www.wychall.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the drb Ignite multi-academy trust. It is one of nine primary schools in the trust.
- There have been significant changes to staffing and leadership since the last inspection in 2017. The headteacher was appointed in January 2018. He has subsequently been appointed executive headteacher, overseeing two schools in the trust. He remains substantive headteacher of Wychall.
- The deputy headteacher is acting head of school. Directors for learning and inclusion and an assistant headteacher have all been appointed since the last inspection. Leadership in the early years and in most subjects including geography, mathematics and PE is new.
- The governing body was disbanded after the last inspection. It was replaced by an interim executive board (IEB). The trust then appointed an executive governance group after the IEB was disbanded. This group is not the governing body, however. The trust board has responsibility for governance.

- There has been a significant increase in the proportion of pupils with SEND, which is now well above the national average. Very few pupils have an education, health care plan, however.
- Mid-year and mid-key stage admissions are well above the national average.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We held meetings with the executive headteacher, the acting head of school, the assistant headteacher, the director of learning, the director of inclusion (SEND coordinator) the coordinator for early years and other leaders and members of staff. We spoke to pupils. We met two members of the trust board, including the chief executive officer.
- We took account of 28 responses to the Parent View freetext service and 30 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We also took account of concerns raised through an email from a parent. We reviewed 28 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- We considered information on behaviour, personal development, safeguarding and child protection.
- There is one pupil placed in a registered alternative provision.
- We focused deeply on early reading, English, mathematics, geography and PE. We visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, and spoke to subject leaders, teachers and pupils. We also looked at pupils' work in French, history, music, personal social and health education and RE.

Inspection team

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