

Inspection of Westacre Infant School

Finchfield Hill, Finchfield, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV3 9EP

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a calm and caring school. Staff know the pupils well and are attentive to their needs. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. They are happy and make lots of friends. Playtime is full of fun and pupils enjoy building things with the construction toys and learning to walk on stilt buckets.

Pupils are respectful to each other and to adults. They help each other in class, take turns and share equipment sensibly. Pupils understand that bullying is different to routine 'fall outs'. This is because they are taught the acronym 'STOP' for bullying – 'Several Times On Purpose'.

Parents have very positive views of the school. Many commented favourably on the contact and home education provided during the pandemic period. They are also full of praise for the headteacher.

Staff do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can learn. Some subjects are not planned clearly enough, and teachers do not check how well pupils remember things. Some work does not meet the learning needs of pupils of different abilities. Reading is also not prioritised strongly enough to ensure all pupils learn to read fluently and enjoy reading.

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

Since his appointment, the headteacher has reviewed and improved many systems across the school. He has created a harmonious and caring school with a dedicated and hard-working team of staff. All adults want the best for pupils.

Leaders have redesigned the curriculum. They have worked closely with the receiving junior school to ensure that pupils are well prepared for key stage 2. Pupils enjoy the activities offered. However, plans in place do not set out clearly what teachers want pupils to know and remember long term. Assessments are also not used well enough to check if pupils are retaining information taught. As a result, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not picked up and addressed systematically.

Most subject leaders are relatively new to their post. They have designed and initiated plans and are committed to raising standards. However, at this time, many lack the subject knowledge and expertise required to ensure that pupils acquire the knowledge and skills needed to achieve well in all subjects.

Leaders have not prioritised reading well enough. Phonics teaching in Reception Year is not introduced early enough and is not taught daily. There are very few books available in Reception classrooms for children to choose to read for themselves. The home-reading partnership with parents is also not sufficiently well established or consistent across the school. Not all pupils take home a reading book

or sound cards to practise with their parents. As a result, some children make slow progress.

The new leader for mathematics has acted swiftly and has already begun to develop staff's knowledge and confidence. Pupils use a wide variety of resources to aid their understanding in lessons. However, work set often lacks challenge for the most able pupils and structure for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils also struggle to explain their methods because of their lack of mathematical vocabulary.

Pupils with SEND receive additional adult support. However, leaders lack overview of this support and do not check how effective it is. The curriculum is not adapted well enough to meet these pupils' needs. As a result, some find the work set in English and mathematics too challenging. They then lose focus in lessons and become distracted. A small number of pupils remain on part-time timetables for too long.

Pupils behave well in and around school. Disruptions to learning in class are rare. This ensures that pupils can get on with their work easily. Staff and parents agree that behaviour is managed well.

There is a strong focus on respect and diversity in school. All pupils are welcomed and included. They learn to be respectful citizens and understand the school values. The school offers a range of clubs, visits and visitors to enrich and enhance the curriculum. These add to pupils' enjoyment of school. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme helps pupils learn about their community, themselves and healthy living.

Children in the early years settle quickly. Children chat happily to the adults who care for them and readily share equipment. They enjoy the wide range of activities provided to stimulate and develop their early social, physical and communication skills. However, staff wait too long before formally teaching early literacy and mathematics.

Staff feel valued and morale is high. Teaching and support staff work in close collaboration. They report that leaders are approachable, supportive and mindful of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Training has helped staff understand local risks and what to look out for when considering if a child is safe. Clear processes are in place so all staff can record and report concerns and incidents. The headteacher acts promptly to ensure that all pupils are safe and any relevant agencies contacted if needed.

Pupils learn how to keep safe online and in their local area as part of the PSHE programme.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject plans in English, mathematics and most foundation subjects are at an early stage of development from the early years to the end of Year 2. They do not explicitly identify the key knowledge and skills teachers want pupils to learn in each lesson or by the end of a unit of work. Leaders should ensure that staff are clear about the learning objectives and that key component knowledge is included in all planning.
- The promotion of reading lacks urgency and importance. This is slowing the progress pupils make, especially pupils with lower starting points. Leaders need to ensure that children get off to a swift start with phonics in the early years. Books should be readily available in all classrooms to encourage and entice pupils to enjoy reading. Systems also need to be fully established across the school to engage parents in supporting their children to read at home.
- Assessment procedures are not fully embedded or accurate. As a result, assessments are repeated unnecessarily, and work is not suitably matched to pupils' needs. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used astutely and to determine what pupils know and remember. This will help identify gaps in knowledge, inform teachers' planning and accelerate the progress of pupils.
- There is a lack of provision mapping and evaluation of the support provided for pupils with SEND. This means leaders do not have a strategic overview of this aspect of the school. The curriculum is not adapted well enough to meet pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils lose focus during lessons. Leaders should ensure that all support is better tracked and its impact monitored. Pupils on part-time timetables should be reintegrated to school as soon as possible.
- The development of the subject leadership role has been difficult during the pandemic. Nevertheless, the subject knowledge and expertise of middle leaders needs further development. Leaders should provide training and management time for all subject leaders to monitor and evaluate their respective areas.

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	104312
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10199668
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Janine Wright
Headteacher	Aidan Edmunds
Website	www.westacreinfantschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 March 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- There has been a significant change in the leadership of the school since the previous inspection. The headteacher was appointed in September 2018. A new deputy headteacher joined the school on a one-term secondment in September 2021. There have also been staff changes to the leadership of English, mathematics, early years and SEND within the last two years.
- The governing body has recently been reconstituted and many new members have joined.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders, teachers and the special educational needs coordinator. Two meetings were conducted remotely with the English subject leader.
- The inspectors held a meeting with a group of governors, including the chair of governors. A telephone interview with a representative of the local authority was conducted.
- The inspectors did deep dives in reading, English, mathematics, geography and PSHE. They visited lessons, talked to teachers and pupils and looked at pupils' books. They observed pupils reading to the headteacher.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtimes and talked to them informally about behaviour, bullying and their well-being.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, development plan, curriculum plans and a report from the local authority. They looked at records of behaviour, exclusions and attendance.
- As part of the safeguarding checks, the inspectors looked at the school's single central record and talked to staff about the training they have received and how they ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- The inspectors talked to parents at the start of the school day and considered 62 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the seven responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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