

Inspection of a good school: Sharmans Cross Junior School

Sharmans Cross Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1PH

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 November 2021

Outcome

Sharmans Cross Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Sharmans Cross. They enjoy coming to school. Pupils build strong friendships and are kind to each other. They understand that everyone is different. Pupils show respect towards others. They are proud to raise money for different causes. For example, pupils have recently worn red to raise money for a heart charity.

In lessons, pupils listen attentively and work hard. They walk sensibly around school and hold doors open for others. Pupils look after their school, for example, by making sure that corridors are tidy. Pupils know what bullying is. They say that when it happens, adults deal with it quickly. Pupils feel safe at school.

Leaders have put in place a broad curriculum. Pupils achieve well, particularly in English and mathematics. Leaders are developing the curriculum in other subjects so that pupils are similarly successful. Pupils find lessons fun. They know that an adult will help them if they find something difficult.

Leaders enrich the curriculum in a range of ways. Pupils talk enthusiastically about after-school clubs such as gymnastics, art and Spanish. All pupils benefit from the chance to go on a residential visit each year. For example, Year 6 pupils have recently enjoyed a four-night stay in Red Ridge.

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

All leaders are ambitious for what they want pupils to achieve. They have planned a curriculum that develops pupils' knowledge in a range of subjects. In mathematics, teachers build pupils' understanding a bit at a time. Teachers make sure that pupils have time to practise and revisit what they have learned. As a result, pupils have a strong understanding of important concepts.

Pupils enjoy reading. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils can read well. The small number of pupils at the early stages of learning to read receive extra teaching to help

them catch up. Currently, more pupils than usual need this support. This is because the COVID-19 pandemic has hindered phonics teaching over the past 18 months. Teaching assistants work with individual pupils to teach the sounds they need. However, this teaching is not frequent or systematic enough to help pupils catch up as quickly as they could. Leaders know this. They are taking action to improve phonics teaching. For example, leaders are increasing staffing so that pupils can receive daily support.

In subjects such as art, history and geography, leaders are still refining curriculum plans. Leaders have thought carefully about what pupils in each year group should know in each subject. However, they have not yet broken these end points down further. Therefore, in some lessons, teachers cover big chunks of content. This means that pupils find it difficult to remember some of what they have learned, and to make links between learning in previous topics and now.

Staff care well for pupils. Pupils use 'zones of regulation' to show how they are feeling each day. Those who need support receive it. Leaders work with staff to ensure that they understand the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils have individual plans with targets that are closely matched to what they need to work on. Leaders keep a close eye on the progress these pupils are making.

Leaders encourage pupils to take on responsibilities. Pupils take their roles as reading buddies, games leaders and library monitors seriously. Staff plan trips and invite visitors to bring the curriculum alive. For example, pupils recently enjoyed a visit by the children's author Tom Palmer.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They use the behaviour system consistently. Pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day. They know that they will be recognised for doing the right thing, for example through raffle tickets and 'star of the week'.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They support and challenge leaders effectively. Governors are working with leaders and staff to find ways to streamline staff's workload. Staff appreciate this. They are happy working at Sharmans Cross.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide regular training to keep staff up to date with safeguarding priorities. Staff teach pupils about how to stay safe in different situations, for example online and when riding a bicycle. Pupils learn about healthy relationships.

Staff are alert to the signs that might suggest a pupil is at risk. They know what to do if something does not seem right. Leaders respond promptly to any concerns that arise. They signpost vulnerable families to external agencies so that they get the help they need. Governors check the effectiveness of leaders' actions in keeping pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. Leaders know this and are taking action to address it. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- In some subjects, leaders have not identified and sequenced the precise knowledge they want pupils to learn. Some leaders lack the secure subject knowledge to do this well. As a result, sometimes teaching does not enable pupils to develop a deep understanding of what they learn. Leaders need to develop their subject knowledge so that they can identify the small chunks of knowledge they want pupils to learn and remember in order to help pupils be successful in all subjects.
- Leaders provide extra teaching for pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. However, this is not frequent or systematic enough. This means that pupils do not catch up as quickly as they could. Leaders should continue with their plans to ensure that these pupils receive more frequent phonics teaching so that they catch up even more quickly.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good/outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2012.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	104049
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10200186
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Kelly
Headteacher	Sara Wilkes
Website	www.sharmans-cross.solihull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The governing body manages a before- and after-school club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken this into account in her evaluation.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The inspector met with the chair of the governing body and six governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: early reading, art and design, and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector met with the subject leader, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also

looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about the curriculum in geography, history, science and modern foreign languages.

- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils from each year group read.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime. The inspector spoke formally with groups of pupils as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school. The inspector reviewed the 15 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- The inspector met with leaders about the school's safeguarding procedures. The inspector reviewed policies and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and pupils who have left the school. The inspector spoke to pupils, parents and staff about pupils' safety.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, and information on the school's website.
- The inspector took account of the 58 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the 41 free-text comments. The inspector spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. The inspector also considered the 18 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Claire Jones, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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