

# Inspection of Palfrey Junior School

Dale Street, Walsall, West Midlands WS1 4AH

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Inspection dates: 12 and 13 January 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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|---------------------------|----------------------|
| The quality of education  | <b>Good</b>          |
| Behaviour and attitudes   | <b>Good</b>          |
| Personal development      | <b>Good</b>          |
| Leadership and management | <b>Good</b>          |
| Previous inspection grade | Requires improvement |

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Palfrey Juniors are proud of their school and love learning. They enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. The executive headteacher, school leaders, staff and governors aim to provide the very best education for pupils. They ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language, have access to a broad curriculum. The school's motto of 'from little acorns to mighty oaks' is evident in all aspects of school life.

Pupils are keen to find out about new things and focus well during their lessons. They have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are proud of their work and are keen to share their successes with visitors. They behave well in lessons, when moving around the school and at playtimes. This positive attitude towards school and each other is evident in all year groups. Pupils are polite and well mannered, treating each other with kindness and respect.

Pupils say that they feel safe because they are well cared for. They understand the different types of bullying but say that bullying is very rare.

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

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the school. They ensure that pupils experience a rich and exciting curriculum. Leaders have recently refined the curriculum in most subjects to highlight the key facts and vocabulary, or 'sticky knowledge', that pupils need to learn and in what order. In many subjects, including mathematics, reading and history, curriculum plans set out precisely the knowledge pupils need to remember. In these subjects, new learning builds on what pupils know and can do. This helps pupils to make progress and learn well. However, in a few subjects, such as music, plans are less precise. In these subjects, the knowledge that teachers expect pupils to learn is not always identified clearly. This slows pupils' learning. Leaders recognise this and have plans in place to develop the curriculum further in these subjects.

Leaders and governors have high aspirations for everyone. They want pupils to succeed. They have created a purposeful environment where pupils are keen to learn. Teachers use assessment well to make careful checks on what pupils know and remember. They then use this information to identify pupils who need extra help or those who have gaps in their learning. Pupils catch up quickly using the interventions put in place.

Leaders understand the importance of reading. There is a structured approach to reading across the school. Pupils read regularly in school and at home. They enjoy story time at the end of each day. Staff have had training in the teaching of phonics.

Most staff can support pupils effectively with their reading. However, the new phonics programme is in its early stages of implementation. Some staff are still developing their subject knowledge and confidence. This means that, occasionally, staff miss opportunities to move children on in their learning.

Leaders ensure that lessons in various subjects promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. These lessons help pupils understand how to care for themselves and how to maintain healthy relationships with others. They learn about different faiths and understand why they need to show respect to others. This work is preparing pupils for life in modern Britain.

Pupils with SEND receive good support and are fully included in all aspects of school life. Staff receive regular and effective guidance about how to support pupils with SEND. They understand pupils' particular circumstances and match learning to meet these needs. As a result of this, pupils participate fully in lessons.

Governors know the school well. The school also receives good support from the Cadmus Federation. Leaders are aware of the workload pressures on staff, and they manage them well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. There is a strong culture of safeguarding and effective systems are in place to keep pupils safe. Staff receive regular training that ensures they can identify any problems that pupils may face. Safeguarding records are thorough and well maintained. Strong communication ensures that staff share concerns swiftly.

Leaders make sure that pupils develop the knowledge they need to keep themselves safe. This information is also regularly shared with parents. Pupils know who to speak to if they have worries and have confidence in adults to sort things out when needed.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The implementation of the new phonics programme is at an early stage. As a result of this, some staff are not yet sufficiently confident in supporting children in the early stages of learning to read. As a result, staff sometimes miss opportunities to move pupils on in their learning. Leaders need to ensure that all staff are confident in the delivery of the programme so that it meets the needs of all pupils.
- A few foundation subjects are not as well developed as others. As a result of this, pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Leaders should ensure that

all subjects are planned effectively and delivered well so that pupils can make the best possible progress.

## **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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 104160   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Walsall  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10201036   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Junior   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 7 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 358  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Roland Roberts   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Angela Hill (Executive headteacher)  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.palfrey-j.walsall.sch.uk/">www.palfrey-j.walsall.sch.uk/</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 30 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                          |

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school is part of the Cadmus Federation of Schools.

## Information about this inspection

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

This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body and had a separate telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection focused on reading, mathematics, music, history and art. Inspectors met subject leaders for these subjects and undertook joint visits to

lessons with school leaders. They also talked to pupils and teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to curriculum planning and development, safeguarding arrangements, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors also reviewed the school's evaluation of its performance and its development plans.
- Inspectors talked to staff about their role in keeping pupils safe.
- Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with many pupils and observed playtime.
- Inspectors met with parents to gain their views of the school. They reviewed responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including additional free-text comments. They also took account of responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil questionnaires.

### **Inspection team**

Emma Gater, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Catherine Crooks

Her Majesty's Inspector

Graeme Rudland

Ofsted Inspector

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