

Inspection of an outstanding school: Delves Infant School

Botany Road, Delves, Walsall, West Midlands WS5 4PU

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2022

Outcome

Delves Infant School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Delves Infant School is a vibrant learning community where pupils are safe and happy. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They know that any unkindness is sorted out quickly by staff. When pupils are particularly kind to others, their names are displayed with pride on the 'tree of kindness'. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils are respectful of others and welcoming to all. Pupil leaders help others on the playground. Teachers celebrate pupils' successes every day.

Leaders' unwavering commitment to excellence, equity and fairness underpins all aspects of school life. Leaders set the highest expectations because they want the very best for pupils. They aim for pupils to 'dream, believe and achieve', and they do.

Support for pupils' personal development is exemplary. Teachers closely track pupils' personal, social and emotional development through the character curriculum. The 'Delves offer' sets out 50 stimulating activities that pupils experience before they leave Year 2. These range from a beach day in pre-school to attending Delves university in Year 2. Lunchtime and after-school clubs include choir, drama and sign language. Through these varied and exciting experiences, pupils develop confidence and resilience ready for the next steps of their education.

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

Leaders' vision for the school is shared by all. Pupils achieve highly because the curriculum is exceptionally well sequenced and planned. Nothing is left to chance. Leaders intend for all pupils to develop the knowledge and skills they need to prepare them well for the next stage of their education and persevere. As one pupil said, 'Resilience is the key. It can help you to keep trying until you get the answer'. Teachers share leaders' high expectations. They say there is no glass ceiling to what pupils can achieve. Pupils respond well to these high expectations. They are eager to learn and fully engaged in lessons.

Teachers deliver the planned curriculum exceptionally well. In lessons, they recap previous learning, clarify misconceptions and celebrate successes. This simple but effective approach helps pupils remember what they have learned. Teachers check pupils' learning regularly in lessons so that pupils know how well they are doing, and any mistakes are corrected quickly. Pupils who need more support receive it without delay. The curriculum allows time for pupils to deepen their learning. Teachers provide lots of opportunities for pupils to recall what they remember from previous learning. As a result, pupils' knowledge and skills become securely embedded. In history, for example, pupils build up rich pictures of life in the past. Pupils are confident mathematicians because they have lots of opportunities to practise and apply their knowledge about mathematics.

Pupils love to read. This is because teachers provide lots of opportunities for pupils to read and listen to exciting stories. Teachers teach reading skilfully. They help pupils remember letters and sounds using familiar rhymes and hand gestures. As a result, most pupils become confident, enthusiastic, fluent readers at a young age. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive well-targeted support to become fluent readers as quickly as possible. They study the full curriculum, with support in a way that is appropriate to their needs.

Children in the early years make excellent progress from their starting points. Adults support pupils well to develop their skills. They know that many children have missed out on opportunities to play with other children during the pandemic. This has had a detrimental impact on children's communication, social and physical development. Despite this, leaders have maintained their high expectations. They have put in place the support that children need to catch up quickly. As a result, children are progressing well.

The success of the curriculum reflects the high-quality leadership in the school. The executive headteacher, the wider leadership team, teachers and governors all work together to bring the school's vision to life. Governors' expertise in safeguarding and finance, for example, is appreciated by leaders. Teachers are fully involved in reviewing and revising the curriculum. They are passionate about teaching and learning. They share ideas and constantly reflect on their practice to make sure it is the best it can be for the benefit of pupils.

Leaders make sure that teachers' workload is manageable. Teachers say they know that reducing workload is a high priority for leaders. Support staff are committed and well informed. They feel valued for the contribution they make to the life of the school. One staff member's comment reflected the views of many when they said, 'We are the Delves family.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are well trained in safeguarding. They are vigilant and report any concerns about pupils' well-being. Leaders promptly identify pupils who might need extra help and make sure that the right support is in place for pupils and families. A mental health well-being

hub is being set up on site so that parents, carers and pupils can access support quickly and conveniently.

Leaders keep meticulous records of employment checks for all staff. The safeguarding governor works closely with leaders to ensure that safeguarding systems and procedures are informed by the most up-to-date guidance. Parents know their children are safe here.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in February 2016.

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	104150
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10211914
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Girish Mistry
Headteacher	Amanda Arnold (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.delvesinfantschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 and 24 February 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Delves Federation with Delves Junior School. Both schools are located on the same site and share a dining hall and before- and after-school club.
- The executive headteacher leads both schools in the federation. Each school has a head of school and separate leadership structures.
- The governing body serves both schools.
- Delves Infant School offers part-time places for a small number of 2-year-old children.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the assistant headteachers and the special educational needs coordinator.

- Meetings were also held with members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. A telephone conversation took place with a representative from Walsall local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. Inspection activities in these subjects included: lesson visits, discussion with staff and pupils, meeting with subject leaders and work scrutiny.
- The inspector also observed pupils reading to an adult.
- The inspector considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement.
- Minutes of governors' meetings and a report from the local authority-commissioned school improvement partner were also scrutinised.
- The inspector also looked at records of behaviour, attendance and safeguarding and met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and talked to them informally about behaviour, bullying and support for their personal development.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day and considered the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, as well as the free-text responses.
- Responses to the staff questionnaire were considered. The inspector also gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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