

Inspection of a good school: Dodford First School

Fockbury Road, Dodford, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 9AW

Inspection date: 22 March 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are at the heart of this small, friendly school. They are kind to each other. In lessons, and at breaktimes, they happily support each other. Older pupils enjoy sharing their games with younger pupils, teaching them as they go.

Pupils enjoy learning. They take pride in their work. However, sometimes leaders have not identified the key knowledge pupils need in order for them to achieve well.

Pupils enjoy opportunities to learn about other faiths and cultures. They eagerly take part in fundraising for charities. Staff and pupil relationships are good; they care about each other.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Staff expectations are high, and pupils meet those expectations. Pupils are welcoming, polite and well-mannered. Pupils are confident that should bullying occur, staff would put a stop to it. Pupils feel safe in school.

Most parents and carers are very happy with the school. They like its family feel. Some would like more communication about how their children are doing. Leaders have plans to address this.

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

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, staff illness, including that of the headteacher, and a high turnover of support staff have had a significant impact on the school's work. However, staff worked tirelessly to ensure that pupils were safe and to give them a broad curriculum.

Reading is a priority for the school. Learning to read starts as soon as children enter Reception. Pupils read from books well matched to the sounds they know. They learn how to sound out and blend words so they become fluent readers. Effective support from staff allows pupils who find reading more difficult to catch up. Leaders ensure pupils read high-quality texts. This supports pupils' understanding and writing skills. Pupils enjoy reading and listening to stories and using the school library. The school has recently introduced a new scheme for teaching phonics. This is working well in Reception. However, not all staff have received the training they need to teach phonics effectively.

Children settle into Reception very well. The environment is attractive and purposeful. Leaders have planned and resourced indoor and outdoor areas well. They provide children with a wide range of exciting learning opportunities. This, alongside quickly established routines, helps children become confident, eager learners.

Teachers encourage pupils to problem-solve and develop their mathematical reasoning skills. Pupils develop an understanding of the number system and calculation. They revisit number operations, such as multiplication, to secure learning. Leaders have recently reviewed the scheme of work for mathematics. However, staff have had limited training, so they are not all confident to teach this new scheme effectively. This means pupils' learning in mathematics is not always as strong as it could be.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support. They enjoy joining in with all aspects of school life. Staff quickly identify pupils' needs and give them the support they need.

Leaders' plans to deliver a high-quality curriculum remain at an early stage of development. In some subjects, including history, leaders have put curriculum detail in place, with key vocabulary identified. However, not all subject plans help staff know what pupils must learn. Plans do not show the key knowledge pupils must know and remember. As a result, staff cannot accurately assess how well pupils are doing.

Pupils have opportunities to take on roles and responsibilities in school. They act very maturely and enjoy contributing to the life of the school. They were eager to talk to inspectors and share their experiences and learning.

The governing body has gone through a period of considerable change. The chair is well aware of the needs of the school. However, governors do not currently have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors are not offering sufficient support and challenge to help the school progress.

Teachers and support staff feel overwhelmed by workload issues. They are proud to be part of the school but need more communication, training and strategic support from leaders.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that curriculum development and strategic leadership may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take safeguarding seriously. They ensure that staff receive regular training and that they know the signs in pupils that might indicate concern. Staff know their pupils and families well. They are alert to any issues and are quick to offer support where needed. They follow up any concerns rigorously. Leaders keep well-documented safeguarding records. Leaders make the necessary checks on staff before they join the school.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know whom they could speak to if worried. They learn how to keep themselves safe, including, for example, when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school curriculum is not yet sufficiently well developed. It lacks the clarity and coherence to help teachers teach and pupils know and remember more over time. Leaders should now review and extend their emerging plans to ensure pupils' learning builds in a logical, sequential way. Leaders should prioritise the key areas of the curriculum that need urgent development and focus on these in a strategic, systematic way, reducing teachers' workload and ensuring success.
- Not all staff are confident or consistent in their approach to assessment. This means they are not completely sure of how well pupils are doing, or of what came before and what needs to come next. Leaders should provide support, including training, to help staff accurately identify pupils' progress in ways that are effective and manageable.
- Teachers have not had enough training on how to deliver the mathematics curriculum effectively. Similarly, not all staff have received training in the new phonics scheme. This means that some teachers are less confident in teaching mathematics and phonics. Leaders should ensure that staff have sufficient resources and are well trained to deliver mathematics and phonics effectively to secure the best outcomes for all pupils.
- Many governors are new to role and are not yet able to accurately evaluate the school's curriculum. Leaders should quickly develop the capacity and skills of governors so they have an accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This will enable them to offer effective challenge and support to leaders.

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. 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 good in December 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	116670
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10205183
Type of school	First
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jonathan Shapiro
Headteacher	Lisa Parkes
Website	www.dodford.worcs.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 December 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders within the school and teaching and non-teaching staff. The lead inspector also met the chair of the governing body. She had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors met with key staff responsible for safeguarding and checked the single central record and procedures for the recruitment of staff. They discussed procedures and policies relating to safeguarding and the welfare of pupils. When inspecting safeguarding, the inspectors considered the school's procedures for recruiting staff, the quality of staff training and the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class and at other times during the day. They spoke with parents, staff and pupils about behaviour in school.
- An inspector spoke with parents at the end of the school day. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text responses.
- The inspectors reviewed the school's website and public information.

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Inspection team

Tina Willmott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Susan Ray

Ofsted Inspector

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