

Inspection of John Gulson Primary School

George Street, Coventry, West Midlands CV1 4HB

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Two years ago, leaders and governors knew that the quality of education at the school was declining. The quality of teaching was not as good as it should have been. Pupils were not making enough progress. The situation has improved substantially since then. Senior leaders have identified the causes of the decline and are rigorously addressing them. Teachers' expectations for pupils are now high.

The curriculum drivers are 'wellness, empowerment, communication'. These values are at the heart of the curriculum that leaders are implementing. This new curriculum provides a successful start to children's education in the Nursery and the Reception classes. It is starting to have a positive impact on the quality of pupils' work in key stages 1 and 2.

Pupils enjoy school. They behave well in lessons and around the school at break and lunchtime. They feel safe at school because staff look after them well. Pupils say that bullying is not a problem at the school. They know that staff would deal with it if it happened. There are a lot of opportunities for pupils to learn outside the classroom and to develop their talents and interests.

Many parents appreciated the way the school supported them and their children during lockdowns.

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

After a period when it operated without stable leadership the school now benefits from an effective leadership team. Leaders are implementing a well-thought-through three-year plan to improve teaching and learning in all subjects. Leaders want pupils to progress well in all subjects from year to year and to be well prepared for secondary education. They are constructing an ambitious curriculum to achieve this aim.

In the Nursery and Reception classes, the implementation of the new curriculum has been successful. Staff plan and deliver a range of activities that support all aspects of the children's development. From early on, children develop their literacy and numeracy skills. They are well prepared for key stage 1. In key stages 1 and 2, the development of the curriculum has been slowed down by the COVID-19 disruption. Plans are more developed in some subjects than in others, but need refining in most subjects. Training for teachers to deliver these plans is also behind schedule and not complete yet.

The ambitions of the curriculum are not implemented with enough consistency across the subjects. In mathematics, for example, the way teachers check pupils' understanding does not always help them to identify gaps in learning and to inform their teaching. In other subjects, like science or geography, teachers do not always identify pupils' misconceptions.

The development of reading is a top priority in the leaders' improvement plans. The school is using a new and effective phonics scheme that is popular with staff and children. In Nursery, staff introduce children to elements of phonics and develop their interest in books and stories. In Reception, children have formal phonics lessons from the start. Teachers ensure that children who find reading difficult get support quickly. Those children have extra phonics lessons to keep up. This support is effective. Most pupils can read fluently by the end of Year 2. The school expects pupils to read every day at home. Most of them do.

Pupils want to learn. They get on well with each other and with the adults in the school. They do not disrupt lessons.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is another priority for leaders. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works well with staff to ensure that the support that pupils need is identified. Pupils with SEND study the full curriculum and take part in all the school activities. Staff provide additional support with learning to pupils with SEND when required, but they do not always plan and target this help well enough. Support sessions for reading work well for pupils with SEND. However, in other subjects, the impact of extra help is more variable.

Leaders want pupils to grow as well-rounded and responsible individuals. Pupils' personal development is a key strength of the school's curriculum. Pupils learn about different faiths and beliefs, the law, democracy and healthy living. They take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and after school. They attend well-being workshops, where they learn how to understand and control their feelings.

Staff support the leaders' drive to improve the school. The relationship between leaders and staff is positive. Staff acknowledge that leaders are mindful of not imposing unreasonable workload.

Governors are knowledgeable and determined to secure rapid improvement for the school. They fulfil their role very well. They support and challenge leaders in equal measure.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff are well trained and vigilant. Staff are confident to identify and report issues. Leaders are effective when dealing with external agencies and families to protect pupils who are at risk.

Leaders and governors have the expertise to recruit staff safely and to deal with allegations about staff.

In presentations in assemblies, and in personal, social, health and economic lessons, pupils learn how to keep safe in a range of situations. They also learn how to use the internet and social media safely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects the development of the curriculum is still not complete, and subject leaders are still in the process of identifying the key learning they want pupils to know and remember. As a result, pupils' learning does not always build well on what they already know or prepare them for what they will be learning next. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is further developed so that in all subjects pupils acquire and remember key elements of knowledge that prepare them for further learning.
- Teachers do not always use assessment well to identify pupils' misconceptions and gaps in learning. Consequently, some pupils are not learning as much as they should. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is delivered effectively across the school.
- The extra support that pupils with SEND receive to keep up with their learning varies in quality. As a result, additional support does not consistently have the desired impact on pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that all additional support is well planned and effective.

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	103690
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10210914
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	472
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jane Friswell
Headteacher	Victoria Sumner
Website	www.johngulson.coventry.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since September 2020.

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 pandemic began. The 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, the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), who is also the SENCo, and the curriculum lead. The lead inspector spoke with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and two governors. The lead inspector also had a meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography, science and mathematics. 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 checked safeguarding arrangements and school records. The inspectors discussed safeguarding policies and case studies with the DSL. They talked to teachers and other staff about the safeguarding training they had received and about how they put this training into practice.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtimes and talked to parents at the start and end of the school day.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online inspection questionnaire, including written responses. They also considered responses from staff to their online inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Patrick Amieli, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Satchwell	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Turner	Ofsted Inspector

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