

Inspection of a good school: Netherton C of E Primary School

Highbridge Road, Netherton, Dudley, West Midlands DY2 0HU

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 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?

Leaders have adopted an ambitious curriculum. Pupils study a broad range of subjects and topics. They enjoy lessons and are eager to learn new things. However, leaders are aware that there is more work to do to develop the quality of education that the school offers.

All pupils are welcomed and included in the life of the school. Children from the age of two make a good start in the early years, and pupils continue to be well cared for as they grow older. Adults know children very well. They engage positively with families and work hard to promote pupils' well-being.

The majority of pupils are happy and proud of their school. They get on well together. They treat each other with respect and kindness. Bullying is rare. Pupils' playground behaviour is mostly positive, but sometimes games become too boisterous. Some pupils say that this has a negative impact on them having fun at lunchtime.

Leaders have started to reintroduce opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities. These activities include an art club, a choir and a range of sports clubs. Pupils enjoy these opportunities and value them.

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

There have been considerable changes in leadership since the academy opened. The acting headteachers have maintained oversight of the school throughout this period of change. Staff enjoy their work and feel well supported. Leaders have placed particular emphasis on improving the curriculum. They have made many positive changes, but there is still more work to do to develop the quality of the curriculum further.

Leaders have worked hard to ensure that curriculum leaders know how to plan their subjects well. Curriculum leaders have used this knowledge to design a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. This work has included setting out the essential information that leaders expect pupils to know and remember. Teachers present this information in a logical order. For instance, in geography, children in the early years start to draw simple maps. This means they are ready to learn about more complex features of maps in Year 1.

Teachers make accurate checks on what pupils know and remember in subjects such as mathematics and English. These checks provide teachers with useful information which they use to identify pupils who are struggling. These pupils receive extra support in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities often use additional resources to help them learn. Sometimes pupils take part in extra learning sessions. These sessions help pupils to keep up. However, the school's approach to assessment is not yet fully developed in all subjects. This makes it hard for leaders to precisely understand the progress pupils make in all areas of the curriculum.

Staff provide clear explanations to help pupils understand new information. They demonstrate useful methods for working things out. Pupils understand these strategies and use them. However, the tasks that teachers set do not always help pupils' learning. This is because the tasks do not focus sharply enough on the key knowledge that pupils are expected to learn.

Leaders have adopted a new approach to teaching early reading. The approach is well organised. Younger pupils learn phonics every day. They build their knowledge of letters and sounds in a logical order. However, some pupils do not get enough practice. This is because the books that they are sometimes asked to read do not match with their ability well enough. This hinders these pupils from building fluency and confidence in reading.

Staff promote pupils' positive behaviour through verbal praise and school reward systems, such as 'going for gold'. Pupils respond well. Most listen carefully in lessons and work hard to complete tasks. Leaders keep accurate records when there are negative behaviour incidents. They analyse these records, looking for trends and patterns. This information has told leaders that pupils mostly need behaviour support at non-structured times of the day. As a result, leaders have introduced lunchtime initiatives such as a play leader programme. However, pupils' play is still too rough at times. This spoils social experiences for some pupils.

Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Leaders have put systems in place to challenge this. Yet many pupils are still not regular attenders. This barrier to learning has a negative impact on the progress that some pupils make.

Pupils learn about tolerance and respect through the school values. They study subjects and discuss events that broaden their understanding of the wider world. Some pupils, such as 'church leaders', have been motivated to arrange charitable events to help others in the community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Adults know pupils well. This knowledge helps them to identify signs that a child could be at risk of potential harm. Staff know what to do in these situations. They alert leaders quickly. Leaders maintain accurate records and follow up concerns with tenacity. They work well with external agencies to ensure families receive appropriate support when needed.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe by studying the curriculum and through other school activities. For instance, pupils in Years 5 and 6 took part in a theatre workshop that raised their awareness of features of positive and negative relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not always provide pupils with appropriate learning activities that focus on the key knowledge they need to learn. Consequently, pupils do not learn as well as they might. Leaders should continue to develop staff's subject knowledge so that they become more expert in all the subjects that they teach and provide pupils with appropriate tasks to support their learning.
- The school's approach to checking what pupils know and remember is not yet fully developed in some subjects. This means that staff do not identify how much of the curriculum pupils understand. Leaders should ensure that there are methods in place for teachers to check that pupils know and remember the planned curriculum content in all subjects.
- Some pupils practise reading in books that are not precisely matched to their phonics ability. This prevents these pupils from becoming better readers. Leaders should ensure that pupils practise to read in books that are matched to their reading ability.
- Sometimes pupils' play is too boisterous during non-structured times. This disrupts other pupils in their play. Leaders should consider ways to ensure that playtimes are enjoyable for everyone.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This limits pupils' learning. Leaders should continue to strengthen links with parents so that all pupils attend school regularly.

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 predecessor school, Netherton C of E Primary School, to be good in February 2014.

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	144418
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10212334
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	408
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Hugh Richards
Acting headteacher	Lynda Foxall
Website	http://www.netherton.dudley.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher left the school in summer 2021. Since June 2021, the deputy headteacher has worked with the assistant headteacher to maintain leadership of the school. The deputy headteacher is acting headteacher on Monday to Thursday. The assistant headteacher works as acting headteacher each Friday.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

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 headteacher, other senior leaders, and representatives of those responsible for governance, including the chair of the board of trustees and trust executives.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with curriculum leaders and

teachers, visited a sample of lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with some pupils about their learning.

- The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- Through discussions with leaders, pupils and staff, the inspector considered how effectively pupils are safeguarded. The inspector also looked at documents related to safeguarding, including the school's single central record of checks on staff.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in a range of different classes and at different times of the day. The inspector talked to pupils informally about bullying, behaviour and welfare.
- The inspector considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The inspector also took account of responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Jonathan Leonard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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