

Inspection of Joydens Wood Junior School

Birchwood Drive, Wilmington, Dartford, Kent DA2 7NE

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Joydens Wood Junior School are enthusiastic about coming to school. They take an active role in school life and are proud of the contributions they make in a range of roles. Pupils feel safe at school and know how to get help if they have a worry.

Recent improvements to the curriculum are ensuring that pupils find their learning engaging and thought provoking in a number of subjects. The school's reading curriculum is still being developed, and this means that not all pupils read widely or with enjoyment.

Behaviour at school is excellent. Classrooms are calm, settled and focused. During their time at Joydens Wood, pupils learn about 24 carefully selected values. The value of cooperation was the focus value during this inspection. Pupils were thoughtful in making connections between cooperation and values that they had previously learned about. One pupil said that cooperation linked with understanding, because to truly cooperate you need to listen to others and understand their points of view.

Most parents feel very positively about the school. They describe the staff as caring and supportive of their children. A small proportion of parents did express some concerns about how the school supported and communicated with them about their children. Senior leaders and trustees are committed to working positively with any parent who raises a specific concern.

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

The school's last Ofsted inspection, which took place in March 2019, identified concerns about the quality of education that pupils were receiving. Following this inspection, senior leaders began work to completely redesign the school's curriculum. Senior leaders already possessed a clear vision of the engaging education they wanted for the pupils of this school. However, both senior leaders and trustees recognised that despite the dedication of senior leaders and of trustees, the school needed more capacity. They decided that they wanted to join a multi-academy trust so that they were able to work alongside other schools, and benefit from the additional expertise within a trust.

Then, in March 2020, the pandemic began. Senior leaders had to refocus on managing the day-to-day demands of remote education and supporting vulnerable families. Later in the pandemic, as schools reopened fully, staff absence became increasingly challenging. Staff absence and a change in focus impacted upon work to develop the quality of education in a range of ways. It made it harder to engage with external training, for example.

Despite this, senior leaders and trustees have maintained their focus on the quality of education, and on securing the school's long-term future. A multi-academy trust has been identified, which trustees and senior leaders intend the school will join. At present, the school has a service level agreement with this trust and have been supported by the trust since September 2021.

Work to develop the curriculum has continued. In many subjects, there is now a clear and well-sequenced curriculum in place. Subject leaders have been supported to develop the knowledge and understanding they need to lead a subject. In the subjects that are most developed, for example mathematics, science and history, leaders demonstrate real clarity in their curriculum thinking. Senior leaders know that some subjects, including art and design, design technology, music and, crucially, reading, are still in development.

Leaders have taken steps to develop reading in the school. Leaders have recently introduced a phonics programme to support pupils who arrive in Year 3 not yet reading fluently. They are working to raise the profile of reading, for example through assemblies and reintroducing the expectation that teachers will read aloud to their pupils. More widely, however, there is not a rigorous and well-sequenced reading curriculum. Leaders have not thought carefully enough about the books they want their pupils to read, and how they will ensure that they pupils acquire the vocabulary and knowledge they require to read increasingly complex texts as they progress through the school. Weaker readers do not get sufficient opportunities to practise reading books that precisely match the sounds they have learned.

In many subjects, there is still inconsistency in how teaching supports pupils to learn the intended curriculum. In mathematics and reading, for example, teachers' subject knowledge is variable. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are sometimes very well supported in their learning, but this is not yet consistent. Assessment is still in development. Where assessment approaches have been developed, teachers do not always use the assessment as intended or to help pupils embed and use knowledge fluently. Misconceptions are often not identified.

Senior leaders have a clear grasp of where the school is on its journey. They know what needs to happen. They have taken sensible steps in challenging circumstances. They have kept the vision of a curriculum that is engaging and stimulating for pupils at the heart of their thinking. This means that although there is work still do, particularly in reading, pupils are enjoying their lessons. In some subjects, in particular mathematics, science and history, pupils are already achieving well.

Pupils have a wealth of opportunities in respect of their personal development. Trips and visits have been unavoidably impacted by the pandemic, but leaders are re-establishing these opportunities now that circumstances allow. A wide range of clubs, including drawing club, athletics and comic club, are offered.

Senior leaders and trustees are absolutely committed to the school and its pupils; however, leadership and management has been judged to require improvement. This is because minor weaknesses were identified in the school's safeguarding

arrangements and because the board of trustees has not carried out its role to the full. Leaders were aware of this. However, they had not been successful in recruiting and retaining enough individuals with sufficient knowledge, experience and time to effectively fulfil the requirements of the role. The multi-academy trust is now supporting trustees.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a relatively large safeguarding and pastoral team within the school. They, along with all staff, have supported families through the pandemic. Pupils at the school know how to share their worries and concerns with school staff and feel confident to do so. Staff are trained so that they know what to do if they are concerned about a child. Early help services are used to provide families with additional support when they need it. Leaders engage with external safeguarding partners, seeking advice and making referrals.

Safeguarding record-keeping was identified as needing improvement during the inspection. Those responsible for safeguarding in the school were not recording in sufficient detail for it to be clear what had happened, and what had been shared with external safeguarding partners. Actions and decisions reached were not always recorded with sufficient clarity.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Safeguarding records do not consistently include all concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions. This means it is not always clear exactly what has happened. Senior leaders must ensure that they have a precise understanding of statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding, including in relation to record-keeping, and ensure that these requirements are consistently met.
- The school's reading programme is not yet underpinned by a rigorous and sequential reading curriculum that ensures pupils acquire the knowledge they need for improved comprehension through reading increasingly challenging texts at each stage. Pupils are not achieving as well in reading as they should, nor are they reading widely and often. The reading curriculum needs to be planned carefully and deliberately, including the vocabulary that teachers will emphasise within texts.
- The weakest readers do not get sufficient practice in reading and rereading books that match the letter-sound correspondences they know, and which reflect a cumulative progression in phonics knowledge that is matched closely to the school's phonics programme. This means their journey to fluency is not as rapid as it might be. In addition, reading materials are not consistently selected to support pupils' developing love of reading. Leaders need to ensure that any pupil

not yet reading fluently gets very regular practice reading and rereading books that precisely match the letter-sound correspondences they know.

- Teachers' subject knowledge is variable, including in relation to reading and mathematics. This means that teachers do not always plan activities that support the intent of a coherently planned curriculum, nor do they consistently identify misconceptions. Leaders need to ensure that they carefully align the professional development programme for teachers and staff with the intended curriculum so that, over time, they develop teachers' subject knowledge of all the subjects that they teach in a deliberate and planned way and the quality of teaching continues to improve.
- Assessment approaches are not yet embedded and used effectively to support pupils' learning or to produce clear next steps for pupils. In some subjects, such as reading, this links to a lack of clarity in the underlying curriculum intent. In these less developed subjects, leaders still need to ensure that there is sufficient clarity in the underlying curriculum to enable teachers to assess how well pupils are learning that curriculum. In subjects that already have a clear and well-sequenced curriculum, leaders need to ensure that assessment approaches are well understood and used consistently and effectively.

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	137661
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10210897
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	304
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Louise Westpfel
Headteacher	Jacqueline Watson
Website	www.joydens-wood-junior.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The chair of trustees was elected in September 2020.
- There are currently four parent trustees that comprise the board of trustees.
- The school has had a service level agreement in place with a multi-academy trust since September 2021. Under this agreement, the multi-academy trust is providing a range of support to the school, including support with curriculum development.
- The school is not currently using any external alternative provision.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also spoke with the chair of trustees.

- Inspectors met with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust who has a service level agreement with the school, under which it is currently supporting the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, history and design technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors listened to pupils reading and talked to pupils across the school about their love of reading.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about a range of additional subjects, including personal, social and health education.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record and spoke to leaders, staff and pupils. Throughout the inspection, leaders considered and checked the culture of safeguarding within the school. Inspectors spoke with a representative of the local authority about how leaders engage with external safeguarding partners.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plans and minutes of recent trustee meetings.
- Inspectors talked to pupils formally and informally about their learning, what behaviour is like at school and whether they feel safe at school.
- Inspectors reviewed 33 responses to the staff survey, and 55 responses to the parent survey, including the free-text comments that parents made. Inspectors also spoke to parents and carers at the start of the first day of the inspection.

Inspection team

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