

Inspection of Aqueduct Primary School

Castlefields Way, Aqueduct, Telford, Shropshire TF4 3RP

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Aqueduct Primary School. They feel safe and happy. This is because of the positive relationships they form with each other and with the caring staff. Pupils are polite, enthusiastic and welcoming. Parents' views of the school are very positive.

Pupils behave well. They play cooperatively with their friends and work hard in their lessons. Pupils understand what bullying is, including how it can happen online. They say that bullying is rare and if it happens staff quickly sort it out.

Pupils appreciate the different books that they get the chance to read and know how important it is to read well. As one pupil said, 'Reading will help me to get the job I want.' However, in some other subjects, pupils are not helped to achieve as well as they should. Leaders have started to give teachers the training and support they need to make sure that pupils learn well across the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy taking on extra responsibilities. Older pupils like being 'playground pals' and helping their friends during social times. Pupils understand the need to keep healthy, both mentally and physically. They proudly complete their daily mile.

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

The school has faced significant challenges due to COVID-19 related staff absences. This has slowed leaders' plans to improve the quality of education.

Leaders have started to develop an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum. This is more developed in some subjects than in others. In some curriculum areas, subject leaders have not set out in precise enough detail the sequence of knowledge they want pupils to learn. This means that staff are not clear about the essential knowledge leaders want pupils to know. This stops pupils from building on their learning over time.

In English and mathematics, leaders check regularly how well the curriculum is being implemented. In other subjects this is just starting. Delays caused by COVID-19 has meant that some leaders have not had the training they need to check if teachers and pupils need more support. They do not know if teachers are delivering the curriculum well. This means that they do not know how well pupils are achieving.

Leaders have made reading a priority. They have provided staff with training and clear guidance. This means that teachers know which sounds to teach and when to teach them. However, sometimes teachers do not make sure that the books pupils read are carefully matched to the sounds they are learning. They do not check well enough that pupils read these sounds accurately. This slows their journey to becoming fluent, confident readers. Pupils who need to catch up get the right

support. They enjoy reading and value their cosy, well-stocked book corners. Pupils know reading is important and prepares them for life ahead. Reading 'super-heroes' talk proudly about the work they do in supporting less confident readers.

Leaders make sure that provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well matched to pupils' needs. For example, in physical education (PE) leaders have thought carefully about ways that all pupils, no matter what challenges they have, can be involved in learning how to move a ball with increasing skill.

Children in the early years follow well established rules and routines. Children behave well and enjoy playing and talking together, helped by caring and supportive staff. The skilled early years leader is in the process of developing the curriculum. She has a clear vision of exactly what she wants children to achieve by the time they leave reception. However, the detailed knowledge that the early years leader wants children to learn has not yet been mapped out in sufficient detail. This means that staff do not know exactly what the most important knowledge to teach is or when to teach it.

Pupils are confident and courteous. They say that teachers help them sort out any problems or disagreements they have. Pupils get on well together. They are tolerant and respectful. Pupils understand leaders' expectations. As one pupil said, 'We have rules. If we break them, there are consequences.' As a result, learning is rarely disrupted.

Pupils have a secure understanding of healthy relationships. They learn about the importance of respecting people from different faiths and cultures. Trips to Arthog outdoor education centre, the space museum and Blist Hill help broaden life experiences. Pupils strive to be elected as school councillors and are proud of their roles in school life.

Leaders and governors understand the school's priorities for improvement. Governors provide suitable support and challenge. Staff feel proud to work at the school. They all say that they are well supported by their leadership team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know the school community well. They ensure that staff are well trained and know what to do to help keep pupils safe. Pupils say that staff will always try to help them if they feel worried. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children feel safe.

Currently, new electronic safeguarding and attendance systems are not used as effectively as they could be. This means that leaders do not have efficient ways to access or report information in a consistent, accurate and well-organised way.

Leaders carry out appropriate checks for new staff. Policies and procedures for staff recruitment are clear and records kept are up to date.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Safeguarding and attendance systems are not currently used as accurately and effectively as they could be by staff. Leaders should ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and support in how to record information effectively and accurately.
- Leaders ensure that pupils learn their letters and sounds in the right order. However, sometimes staff do not accurately match books to the sounds pupils are learning or check that pupils read sounds accurately. This means that pupils do not have enough opportunities to sound out and blend the new sounds and words they are learning to read. Leaders should ensure that staff provide pupils with books that match the sounds they are learning and regularly check the accuracy of their reading.
- In some subjects, curriculum design is at an early stage of implementation and is not as precise as it should be. As a result, teachers are unclear about exactly what pupils need to learn and by when. Subject leaders should ensure that all curriculum planning is sequenced well. This will help teachers to plan the next steps in learning that pupils need so that pupils know more and remember more across the curriculum from early years to Year 6.
- Some subject leaders have not had sufficient training to enable them to check how well staff deliver the curriculum. Senior leaders should ensure that curriculum leaders have the skills and time to check how well teachers are delivering the intended curriculum. This will enable senior leaders to know how well pupils are achieving.

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	123444
Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	10227358
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Louise Aubrey
Headteacher	Tammy Lockley
Website	www.aqueductprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 and 13 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school does not use 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.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, who is a designated safeguarding leader, the deputy headteacher, the office manager, assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and other leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and PE.

- For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors made visits to classrooms. Most of these visits were with leaders, including the deputy headteacher and subject leaders.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, in classrooms and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their learning and experiences at school. They looked at pupils' work to see how well staff implement the curriculum.
- Safeguarding documents were checked, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children. Inspectors checked that staff implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively across the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View and 31 free-text responses received during the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents after school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, published information about pupils' performance and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors considered information published on the school's website.

Inspection team

Stephanie Moran, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Heather Simpson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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