

Inspection of Halesowen CofE Primary School

High Street, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 3BB

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 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 enjoy attending school. They say that they feel safe and that teachers look after them. Pupils are very understanding and tolerant of others. They say that learning to get on with other people in this way 'gets us ready for the future.' The school's values shine through in the way that they develop pupils' character.

Pupils told inspectors that behaviour in school is good. Inspectors agree. Pupils behave well in lessons. This begins in the early years. Pupils show good manners and follow routines well when moving around school. They can talk about different types of bullying, but say that this rarely happens. One pupil said that, if bullying did happen, staff would 'take rapid action.' Others agree.

Leaders have high expectations for all. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, leaders do not check that teachers always implement the planned curriculum. The way in which the curriculum is organised also means that sometimes pupils miss important learning in different subjects.

Leaders know the pupils well. They want pupils to experience opportunities to help them develop. However, some activities that stopped as a result of the pandemic have not restarted.

Parents appreciate the support that leaders offer to pupils and their families. One parent said that, 'Most of all, my children's feelings and wishes are listened to.'

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

Leaders have created an inclusive environment where pupils feel listened to and supported. Leaders want pupils to enjoy opportunities they might not otherwise experience. For example, players from a local football team coach pupils. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the healthy eating challenge that the football players have set. They know the value of exercise and looking after themselves. Leaders also teach pupils to be accepting and tolerant of individual differences. Pupils are respectful of others and understand that this will help them in later life.

Pupils enjoy lessons. They say that teachers make learning fun. Leaders have thought about what pupils need to learn, and how. However, this is not always implemented as intended. For example, in phonics, there is some inconsistency in the way pupils are taught to read. As a result, pupils use different strategies to help them read unfamiliar words, not all of which are effective. Some pupils rely on staff to do this for them. Similarly, in early years, there are some inconsistencies in how curriculum intentions are followed. Some opportunities to develop language and vocabulary are missed. However, leaders do identify when pupils fall behind in reading. They put in support to help pupils to quickly catch up.

Leaders recognise that there is work to do on the curriculum. This includes how they organise the curriculum. Recent long-term absences from some leaders and staff have made it difficult to move some of this work forward at the necessary pace, but this is now starting to happen. In some subjects, pupils can miss out on important learning. Some subjects are taught intensively over short periods of time and then not taught again until later in the year. Leaders know that this leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge because, for some subjects, there is a long time between lessons. If pupils are absent from school, they may miss some subjects altogether for long periods of time. Currently, leaders do not make sure that teachers identify and fill any gaps, which makes it more difficult for pupils to build on prior learning.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal and social development. They use the local area to enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils have walked to the River Stour. They have investigated plants and flowers in the church yard next door. Although the annual residential trip is not going ahead, leaders have planned a day trip to an activity centre. Leaders organised an online author visit. However, pupils and parents say that they would now like clubs to restart.

Staff develop positive relationships with pupils. There are clear routines and pupils follow these carefully. As a result, lessons are calm and children listen to their teachers. Pupils have positive attitudes to school. They are keen to learn and do well. For example, pupils who find learning to read a challenge know that it is important that they do learn to read. They say that this will help them to read important information when they are older. Leaders and staff have high expectations for all, including pupils with SEND. Leaders have a detailed knowledge of the needs of pupils with SEND. They ensure that the support they receive is effective and appropriate.

New governors are committed to the school. They recognise that there is work to be done. However, a shortage of governors and a previous lack of understanding of the role have impacted on the support and challenge that they have been able to give to leaders. Governors are mindful of the workload of staff, particularly leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know pupils well. They want pupils and their families to thrive. Staff receive up-to-date training. They know what to do if they have a concern. Leaders follow all concerns up swiftly. They involve external agencies when appropriate.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They understand online safety and risks in the local community. Staff also teach them about healthy relationships.

All the required checks on adults in school are carried out correctly. Accurate records are kept.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Governors have yet to provide sufficient support and challenge for senior leaders to make the improvements needed. This means that some aspects of the school's work are not given sufficient scrutiny, challenge or support. Governors should complete the process of recruiting a full governing body with the necessary skills and knowledge to support leaders and ensure pupils receive a good quality of education.
- While leaders have given thought to the curriculum, they have not evaluated carefully enough how the organisation of the curriculum can lead to gaps in pupils' learning. Currently, some pupils can miss important parts of the curriculum, or go for a long time without learning a subject. Leaders should develop the structure and organisation of curriculum subjects so that pupils do not miss significant parts of it, and do not go for long times without studying a subject. This is to ensure that pupils have greater continuity in their learning across the curriculum and can build on prior learning.
- Leaders do not check and monitor effectively enough that teachers are implementing the intended curriculum, including the phonics curriculum and in the early years. As a result, they do not identify where support and challenge are needed. Leaders should improve their monitoring and use what they find to support teachers more effectively in understanding how to implement the intended curriculum.
- Leaders have not yet returned to their previous offer and range of clubs and other enrichment activities post-pandemic. As a result, opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and interests beyond the taught curriculum have slowed. Leaders should consider pupils' needs and implement an appropriate range of enrichment activities to further broaden pupils' development.

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	103847
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10227191
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jane Price and Jane Morgan
Headteacher	Lorna Knowles
Website	http://www.halesowen.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is designated as having a religious character. It received a section 48 inspection in March 2017 when this aspect of the school's work was judged as outstanding.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school has temporarily closed its nursery provision, with a view to reopening in September 2022.

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.
- During the inspection, the inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and physical education. 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 also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, the curriculum leader and governors.
- The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the diocese board of education.
- Inspectors observed some pupils reading to staff. Pupils were observed at lunchtime and on the playground. Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, looked at the single central record of recruitment checks, looked at safeguarding records and talked to pupils and staff.
- Inspectors considered the six responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent view, including five free-text comments. The team inspector spoke with parents at the school gate. Inspectors took account of 22 responses to the online questionnaire for staff. Inspectors also reviewed 28 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Rachel Henrick, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Antony Bradshaw

Ofsted Inspector

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