

Inspection of Walsall Wood School

Brownhills Road, Brownhills, Walsall, West Midlands WS8 7BP

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils get a brilliant education in most subjects. They reach high standards and are more than ready for secondary school by the time they leave.

In lessons and outside, pupils follow leaders' high expectations and treat others fairly. This means that everyone can get on with their work and enjoy playtimes. Older pupils do much to help out. From playground buddies to digital leaders, healthy eating champions and more, many pupils take a lead in helping each day to run safely and smoothly. Bullying is not a problem, although staff and pupils watch out for it and know what to do if it happens.

Staff are kind, cheerful and chatty. They organise many exciting events and interesting lessons. When children first start school, staff make sure that they settle in quickly and feel happy, secure and valued. The curriculum is broad and packed full of things to do, but a small number of subjects are not organised as well as they could be.

Pupils, parents and carers and staff praise the school and its strong leadership. Inspectors agree that leaders have continued to improve the school. They have ensured a good education and excellent care and support for all in the school community.

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

This well-led school has many strengths. Several aspects are exceptional and worthy of being shared more widely. The reading curriculum in particular is excellent. In Nursery, caring and attentive staff help children to listen carefully. This prepares children well for the school's phonics programme. In Reception and key stage 1, staff make sure that pupils learn phonics well. They also teach them effective writing habits, which endure throughout the school. On top of this, leaders' superb communication with families at home has established a healthy reading partnership with parents. Leaders and staff are highly successful at teaching pupils to read.

Furthermore, staff have an informed knowledge of children's authors and books. They use this knowledge well to promote a love of reading, and regularly introduce pupils to new books. In addition, fun events, such as a recent 'wonderful word day', when everyone came into school dressed up as a word, fuel excitement about language. Indeed, during this inspection, pupils chatted happily to inspectors, showing a wide vocabulary and mature turn of phrase.

Many other subject curriculums are also highly effective. Staff have strong subject knowledge, check on pupils' learning, and ensure that it builds logically from Nursery through to Year 6. This success in most subjects has its roots in the top-quality work done in early years. Here, staff give children an excellent grounding in number and

language, and set high expectations for how they should behave and treat others. The success of this early work endures through the school.

In most subjects, the curriculum sets out what pupils should learn and when they should learn it. In subjects such as music and geography, for example, pupils learn new things in a logical sequence and achieve well. In some other subjects, such as history and art, the content and sequences of learning require further refinement. At times, the curriculum tries to cover too much and some essential content is diluted or lost. Pupils do lots of interesting activities, but do not build up secure knowledge and skills as well as they could.

The headteacher and other senior staff lead by example. They keep in touch with what is happening in classes, set high standards and ensure an inclusive curriculum for all. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported to make the most of all the school provides. If staff need to do things differently for some pupils, they still aim for the same goals that are set for others. Overall, the outstanding leadership seen at previous inspections has been maintained. Staff say that leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being.

Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility, and are involved in managing day-to-day life and influencing school policies. For example, digital leaders reinforce leaders' online safety messages, and pupil playground patrollers check that no one feels left out or upset at playtimes. Through such jobs and the school's personal development programme, pupils gain a sense of duty. They also build healthy and responsible attitudes towards education, others and life in general. This is evident in their demeanour and excellent conduct around school. It is also apparent in the many positive comments that pupils and their parents make about school life. Indeed, in their written and spoken comments to inspectors, parents praised the arrangements made when their children first start in early years. They also expressed many positive views about the leadership, inclusion and level of care at the school. Inspection evidence supports these positive views.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school is a safe place for pupils. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe. They are alert to concerns and are quick to act if they are worried about a pupil's safety. Leaders share safety messages with parents, and work with many different organisations to support families.

Pupils understand the importance of respectful and safe behaviour. They have a role in sharing some safety messages, for example about online safety and the damaging effects of bullying.

Governors and other leaders have robust procedures in place to ensure that the school complies with the government's current guidance.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few subjects are not organised as well as they could be. Pupils learn lots of interesting things, but do not learn all that they should. This is because leaders have either tried to put too much into the curriculum or have not enabled pupils to build up some subject-specific knowledge in a logical progression. Leaders know that they need to improve the curriculum in a few subject areas so that pupils learn all that they should.

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.

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	104201
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10240355
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	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Esther Martin
Headteacher	Jenny Garratt
Website	www.walsallwoodschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 and 10 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders provide before- and after-school childcare. They do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the second routine inspection the school had 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, inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, science, history, and art and design. In these subjects, the 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 pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at the curriculum in other subjects in less detail to check how they were organised and taught.

- Inspectors looked at published performance data about the school and a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the curriculum, training, governance and school improvement planning. They also checked the school's website.
- The inspectors asked pupils, staff, leaders, governors and parents about safeguarding arrangements and safety routines. The lead inspector examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records.
- The inspectors watched pupils' behaviour in class, at lunchtime, on the playground, at clubs and at other times during the day.
- Inspectors talked informally with pupils, parents and staff to gather general information about school life. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff's and parents' views. Inspectors spoke with parents on the playground at the start of the school day.
- During the inspection, inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, governors, school staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Emma Titchener

His Majesty's Inspector

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