

# Inspection of a good school: Wychbold First and Nursery School

School Road, Wychbold, Droitwich, Worcestershire WR9 7PU

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Inspection dates:

18 and 19 October 2022

## Outcome

Wychbold First and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at Wychbold First and Nursery School. The school's values of 'safety, trust, achievement, respect and sharing' (STARS) are at the heart of the school. Pupils know and understand why these values are important in life. One pupil explained, 'STARS is about sharing thoughts and ideas and having respect for each other.' Relationships throughout the school, at all levels, are warm and trusting.

Teachers set high expectations for pupils' learning and personal development. Pupils rise to these. They work hard and achieve well. Leaders make sure that pupils experience a rich and ambitious curriculum. Pupils especially love computing, art and design, and learning outdoors in the forest school. The school council helps pupils to learn about democracy and gives all pupils a voice in school life.

Pupils' behaviour is good and their learning is rarely disrupted. They learn and play well together. Bullying is not a problem in the school. Pupils enjoy a range of activities beyond lessons. They are proud to take part in activities such as the campaign to 'walk a million miles' with other trust schools. They are excited about working with a local football club and a visit from their local Member of Parliament. These activities help to develop pupils' wider interests.

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

The school has seen many changes recently. The leadership team has raised aspirations for everyone. Leaders have introduced new routines and expectations. This has strengthened the school. Staff value the support that they receive from leaders and the academy trust. However, some parents and carers feel that the pace of change has been too fast and that they have not been kept informed.

Curriculum thinking is ambitious and sets high expectations for every pupil. The curriculum is well structured and takes into account the good start that children experience in early years. For example, Reception children love exploring their school

environment, including the forest school. They talk about seasonal changes, such as autumn colours, changing trees and tadpoles turning into frogs. This rich learning is built on in key stage 1. Teachers from all phases work together well to ensure that pupils' learning builds on what they already know. This joined-up approach helps pupils learn across a range of subjects, from early years to Year 4.

Across the school, there is a strong focus on securing pupils' confidence and mental mathematical fluency. Right from the beginning, children learn to explore number through practical activities and real-life problems. Reception children use mathematical language such as 'equal', 'more than' and 'fewer than' as they share their thinking. This lays secure foundations for mathematical confidence and reasoning. Leaders adapt the curriculum as needed. For example, they have introduced more sessions to help older pupils remember and use multiplication facts. Pupils enjoy mathematics and achieve well.

Teachers provide the right support for those pupils who need it. They ensure that everyone is fully included in the curriculum and in school life. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the same curriculum as others. When pupils have very high levels of need, activities are adapted well to make sure that they know and remember their learning. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Once in Reception, children follow a well-structured phonics programme. Books are well matched to the sounds that pupils are learning. Teachers have high expectations and generally teach phonics well. They check that pupils remember and use new sounds successfully. Leaders keep a close eye on those pupils who are not keeping up. These pupils receive extra help where needed. However, this small number of pupils do not have enough time to practise and apply the new sounds they are learning, especially as they move into key stage 2. As a result, they do not become confident and fluent readers quickly enough.

Some teachers foster a love of reading by reading aloud daily to pupils. They share stories, poems and rhymes that many pupils would not be able to read themselves. As a result, pupils hear new words and talk excitedly about favourite books and characters, such as 'The Gruffalo'. However, this practice is inconsistent as pupils move through the school. This slows pupils' progress in language comprehension and vocabulary, especially for those pupils who do not experience reading beyond school.

There is a clear focus on the mental well-being of pupils and staff. Staff acknowledge that there has been a lot to take on board over the last year. However, they feel valued and are very positive about the support they receive from the trust, including for their well-being. They say that leaders are responsive and considerate of their workload. Staff feel included in the ambitious vision for the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise pupils' well-being and safety. They ensure that all staff know the risks that pupils may face and how to identify when help may be needed. All staff are well

trained and kept up to date. Records for safeguarding are detailed. There is a strong, whole-school culture of vigilance that is underpinned by the trust's safeguarding team. One teacher's comment captures the views of many: 'We all train together, we talk and work together and everyone puts the children's safety before all else.'

The curriculum teaches pupils how to keep safe. For example, pupils are taught about online safety and the importance of healthy relationships.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have not always communicated effectively with parents. As a result, some parents feel that they do not know why changes have been made to school routines and expectations. Leaders should find new ways of engaging with parents so that everyone can work together to support the improvements being made to the school.
- Teachers do not ensure that the small number of pupils who have fallen behind in their reading have sufficient time to practise the sounds that they have learned. As a result, they do not become fluent readers quickly enough. Leaders should ensure that children who fall behind in reading can practise new sounds frequently so that they can become successful and confident readers.
- Leaders have not ensured that all pupils enjoy listening to a wide range of stories, poems and non-fiction texts. This slows pupils' progress in language comprehension and vocabulary, especially for those children who do not experience reading beyond school. Leaders should ensure that teachers receive sufficient guidance and support to improve this aspect of the reading curriculum.

## **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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Wychbold First and Nursery School, to be good in July 2016.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146027
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241476
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery and first school
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	174
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Caroline Hoddinott
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rebecca Wilks
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wychboldschool.co.uk">www.wychboldschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Wychbold First and Nursery School joined The Rivers Church of England (CofE) Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) in July 2018.
- The head of school was appointed in September 2022. She is supported by an executive headteacher from Rivers CofE MAT.
- Two assistant headteachers were appointed in September 2022.
- Leaders provide before- and after-school childcare on site.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the head of school, the executive headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the leader of SEND and other staff members.

- The inspector also met with the school community advocate and the chief executive officer of The Rivers CofE MAT.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector looked at school documents. These included information about leadership, behaviour, attendance and the school's curriculum and improvement planning.
- The inspector explored the school's safeguarding arrangements through viewing safeguarding records and procedures, meeting with pupils and staff, and talking to safeguarding leaders.
- The inspector talked informally with pupils, parents and staff to gather information about school life. She considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, along with the additional free-text comments. She also considered responses to the pupil and staff surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Marilyn Mottram, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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