

Inspection of a good school: Short Heath Junior School

Pennine Way, Willenhall, West Midlands WV12 4DS

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 November 2022

Outcome

Short Heath Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils. They ensure that pupils gain confidence and achieve well. Pupils describe their school as 'a friendly place' and one where they 'learn to be successful in life'. In lessons, pupils behave well, work hard, concentrate and enjoy talking about their learning.

Most pupils behave sensibly at breaktimes. They play together and share equipment. A few parents and pupils have concerns about behaviour. Despite the helpful support from staff, a small number of pupils sometimes find it difficult to manage their emotions at lunchtime. Pupils are keen to share their ideas with leaders for enhancing the lunchtime experience.

Parents appreciate the care that leaders and staff show their children. Pupils feel safe at school. They can talk to an adult if they are worried about anything, including bullying. This is because adults deal with pupils' concerns quickly.

The pupil leadership team and the subject ambassadors meet with staff and pupils to help improve the work of the school. Opportunities such as this help pupils to develop their leadership skills.

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

Leaders have planned a curriculum that is motivating and ambitious. It is focused on securing pupils' academic success in readiness for secondary school. Most subjects identify the precise knowledge and skills that pupils should learn and in what order they should learn them. In subjects such as art and design, for example, pupils learn to sketch and use colours, tones and tints to add mood to their work. In a few subjects, the curriculum lacks precision and detail. This leads to gaps in pupils' learning.

There is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading. Teachers focus on developing pupils' reading skills, such as comprehension. Pupils enjoy reading and also enjoy finding

out information. This is because teachers promote the importance of reading regularly. Those who need extra help are given the support they need to catch up. Teachers also ensure that pupils are provided with books that match the sounds that they know. Leaders' and staff's actions mean that pupils learn to read well and confidently.

Strong leadership of mathematics, coupled with teachers working together to improve the curriculum, has been instrumental in driving improvements. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to know and understand. At the start of lessons, pupils enjoy answering questions where they recall what they already know. Pupils say that this 'warm-up' helps them to remember important mathematical facts.

Staff assess pupils' progress against the knowledge and skills pupils are expected to learn. They use these assessments to identify and give pupils additional support. Staff do this particularly well in reading and mathematics.

Teachers identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. They take account of the varying and complex needs of pupils. Teachers successfully adjust their lesson delivery for pupils. This helps pupils with SEND to learn the same curriculum as their peers. The SEND coordinator ensures that pupils receive appropriate help. Workshops for parents give them the chance to find out how to support pupils' learning and emotional needs.

Leaders encourage pupils to attend regularly. They work closely with families to promote attendance. Despite this, some pupils are regularly absent. This means they miss too much learning.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen carefully and work hard. Staff sensitively support pupils who get anxious so that learning is not interrupted.

Pupils are well prepared for life beyond Short Heath Junior School. They learn to be positive, respectful and to treat others equally. Older pupils, for example, talk passionately about challenging gender stereotypes. Through after-school clubs, such as art and choir, pupils develop their talents and interests.

Leaders, staff and governors share the same ambitions for pupils. They are inclusive in their approach and make everyone feel welcome. Staff value the effort leaders make to reduce their workload and improve their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders and staff know the needs of pupils very well. They are vigilant to any changes in pupils' manner, and report concerns quickly. Leaders secure the help pupils may need by working closely with other professionals. Leaders keep detailed records of concerns and of the actions they take when issues are brought to their attention.

Leaders make sure that the appropriate checks are undertaken when new staff join the school. Staff training is up to date.

Pupils learn about the importance of staying safe in different situations. For example, they learn how to use the internet safely and learn about healthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few subjects lack the precise identification of subject-specific knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn in each year group. This means that pupils have gaps in their understanding. Leaders should work with subject leaders to develop the curriculum in these subjects further.
- Occasionally, at lunchtime, a few pupils do not adhere to the school's rules and expectations. Sometimes, this leads to boisterous play. Leaders should ensure that the lunchtime experience caters for the behavioural and emotional needs of all pupils.
- Some pupils take too much time off school. This means they are always trying to catch up with the learning they have missed. Leaders should continue to work with families and make sure that pupils attend school regularly.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2017.

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	104188
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10240247
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	286
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Foster
Executive headteacher	Cathy Draper
Website	www.short-heath.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 April 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Short Heath Junior School is part of the Short Heath Federation of schools.
- An executive headteacher oversees all schools in the federation.
- The governing body manages the before- and after-school provision.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other leaders. She also spoke with a range of staff.
- The inspector met with governors and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation and discussed how incidents are managed and recorded.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at playtime, in lessons and around the school. She also spoke with pupils about their experience at school.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the start and end of the school day and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. She also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff questionnaires.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also spoke to pupils and leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects, such as art and design.
- The inspector also listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.

Inspection team

Usha Devi, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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