

Inspection of a good school: Woodthorne Primary School

Woodthorne Road South, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV6 8XL

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 January 2023

Outcome

Woodthorne Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy and caring school. Leaders and staff have high expectations for pupils' learning and personal development. Pupils fulfil these expectations. The school's values of courage, ambition, respect and excellence (CARE) thread through school life. One pupil explained, 'The values are what we need to show in our lives and in our learning.'

Parents and carers hold the school in high regard. One parent said: 'The high standards of learning are only part of the picture here. It's the caring ethos and the values that are instilled and reinforced that help children to grow.' Pupils are successful in this environment. They work hard and are keen to learn. They concentrate well in lessons and are well prepared for the next steps in their education.

Pupils feel safe and valued. Leaders ensure that pupils are taught how to stay safe. Bullying is rare. Leaders take any incident seriously, however small, and respond quickly and effectively.

Pupils especially love the school fields and woodlands, where they learn and explore environmental issues. Pupils enjoy a wide range of experiences, including trips, visits from local artists and clubs, such as fencing, archery and orienteering. These experiences raise pupils' awareness of their community and the wider world.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious and challenging curriculum, from early years to Year 6. They have identified the key knowledge that they want pupils to build over time and the order in which this should be taught. This has raised expectations for staff and pupils. In most subjects, leaders have established effective assessment opportunities to check that the curriculum is helping pupils to learn well. For example, teachers have adapted the geography curriculum to address gaps they have identified in pupils' knowledge of physical geography. This has ensured that pupils remember more of the important

knowledge they need before moving on. Pupils in this subject are therefore confident in what they know and understand.

In some wider curriculum subjects, leaders are still getting to grips with effective assessment approaches. For example, in music, pupils love learning to play instruments, but teachers do not always check consistently that the important musical knowledge and skills have been remembered. This means that pupils are not supported as well as they could be to reach the curriculum goals set out.

Leaders prioritise reading. Staff are expert teachers of early reading and phonics. The well-structured phonics programme is taught systematically. Assessment is precise, and used effectively to check that pupils are remembering and using new sounds. Teachers quickly spot any pupil who may be at risk of falling behind and support them to keep up. Reading books are well matched to pupils' phonic knowledge. Every class has a map of recommended books that encourage pupils to read widely. This rich reading curriculum means that pupils become confident, fluent readers.

Children get off to a flying start in early years. They learn and play together happily indoors and in the rich outdoor environment. Speech and vocabulary development are key priorities. As soon as children join Nursery, they are immersed in books, rhymes and songs. Story times are magical moments. These activities foster a love of learning that is alive and rarely disrupted.

The mathematics curriculum is equally successful. The curriculum is logically sequenced and implemented effectively. Young children explore number through practical activities that are designed to deepen their mathematical understanding. Adults model precise mathematical language. Children love the stories and poems that bring mathematics to life. They are well prepared for Year 1.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and accurately. They work closely with a range of agencies to assess pupils' needs and to identify appropriate support. Pupils with SEND access the full curriculum and achieve well. Teachers adapt the delivery of the curriculum effectively to meet their needs. Pupils are proud of the work in their achievement books.

The school's curriculum is about much more than lessons. Pupils love working with organisations such as Islamic Relief and Christian Aid. They understand British values, such as democracy, respect and tolerance, well. They are encouraged to take on leadership responsibilities, such as being school council or sports leaders. Leaders provide visits that deepen pupils' cultural understanding. For example, pupils visit different places of worship to support their spiritual, moral and cultural development.

Staff are proud to work here, and feel part of the school's ambitious vision and improvement journey. They feel that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have built a strong culture of safeguarding. All staff have regular safeguarding training. They understand how to report a safeguarding concern. Leaders act swiftly to support pupils and their families. The family support worker plays a key role in the school and the community. Records are detailed and timely. Nothing is left to chance.

The curriculum is used well to teach 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)

- In some wider curriculum subjects, leaders have not established ways of using assessment effectively. Teachers do not check that pupils understand and remember the important knowledge that they need to master before moving on to more complex ideas or tasks. Leaders should ensure that teachers check learning in the wider curriculum carefully, in order that pupils know and remember more from earlier lessons.

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 predecessor school, Woodthorne Primary School, to be good in January 2018.

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	146194
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10256961
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	424
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Brocklehurst
Headteacher	Tom Hinkley
Website	www.woodthorneprimary.org/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Perry Hall Multi-Academy Trust in September 2018.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club, managed by the governing body.

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.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the leader for SEND, three members of the local governing body and two representatives from the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at work in pupils' books.

- The inspector met with all staff to talk about the curriculum, staff’s workload and the behaviour and personal development of pupils. She also met with groups of pupils to talk about their learning and well-being.
- The inspector looked at curriculum plans and observed some pupils from Years 1 and 2 reading to a member of staff.
- The inspector checked the school’s single central record and spoke to the headteacher and senior mentor about safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector considered a range of documents, including the school’s self-evaluation and plans for improvement. Records of attendance were checked.
- The inspector observed pupils’ behaviour at playtime and lunchtime and talked to them about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- The inspector talked to parents after school and considered the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text responses. She gathered the views of pupils and staff on site through discussion with these groups and from their online questionnaire responses.

Inspection team

Marilyn Mottram, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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