

Inspection of Lapal Primary School

Priory Road, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 0BZ

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2023

Overall effectiveness **Outstanding**

The quality of education **Outstanding**

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' excellent behaviour allows everyone to get on with their learning. In class, and outside, pupils respect others and engage positively in activities. Bullying is not accepted. Staff are quick to listen and respond if anyone is worried or upset about anything. Pupils are happy, safe and secure at school.

Pupils achieve exceptionally well in many subjects, including reading and mathematics. This is because leaders and staff have high expectations and provide an ambitious and extremely effective curriculum. In addition, parents are highly supportive of the school's work. They make sure their children attend regularly and on time.

Staff expect pupils to do helpful jobs and to have a voice in making decisions. Junior leaders, pupil librarians, sports leaders and many other roles all help to shape the school day. Beyond lessons, the school offers lots of opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their interests. From busking in the playground, to choir, sport clubs and yoga, there are many optional activities, and take up is high. All of this helps to motivate pupils to do their best. They work hard, learn much and enjoy school. By the end of Year 6, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for secondary school.

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

Academic standards are consistently high, but the impact of the school's work goes much further than this. Beyond everyday lessons, there are plenty of exciting, worthwhile activities that fuel pupils' interests and support them to become responsible young people. There are many after-school clubs, trips and visitors that enrich school life. Pupils respond with enthusiasm and parents react with great praise for the school.

Leaders are highly effective. The executive headteacher and senior team are calm and reflective. They pay attention to research and seek expert advice. They have thought very carefully about what pupils need to know and have designed a high-quality curriculum. The curriculum and its impact on pupils' learning are exceptionally strong, in almost every subject. Consequently, pupils make excellent progress and achieve highly year after year.

The school is very successful at teaching pupils to read. A structured phonics scheme starts straight away in Reception. Staff follow this daily throughout early years and key stage 1 for as long as pupils need it. When necessary, they also provide catch-up sessions. All staff have been trained in how to teach phonics so that targeted teaching can continue into key stage 2 for those pupils who need it. Once pupils have mastered phonics, staff introduce them to a wide range of books and do much to promote a love of reading. Similarly, the attention to teaching early

number is exceptionally strong. Indeed, the early years curriculum gives children an excellent grounding in essential knowledge. It paves the way for the learning to come in later years. Furthermore, staff seize opportunities to teach children about fascinating everyday events. From insects on the playground to frost on the grass, staff know how to captivate children's interests and feed their curiosity about the world. Importantly, staff ensure that such spontaneous moments link clearly with planned learning.

Pupils' attitudes towards education are consistently positive. Leaders and staff make the most of this by setting out clear and fair expectations for behaviour and learning in lessons. This allows everyone to learn without interruption.

Across the wider curriculum, leaders provide staff with well-informed guidance, textbooks and resources to ensure that the curriculum is taught well. Staff know which knowledge is important to teach and emphasise so that pupils make meaningful progress. Consequently, pupils learn much across a wide range of subjects. By upper key stage 2, pupils can talk in mature and informed ways about, for example, recurring historical concepts, or the techniques and influences that have shaped their artwork.

Because leaders have ensured that the knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember is identified and sequenced in the curriculum, teachers know exactly what they need to teach. It also means they know what to check. Assessment is focused, brisk and purposeful.

Adults support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities extremely well. Furthermore, staff's attention to well-being and pastoral matters is second to none. Pupils are supported to preserve and to develop resilience and strength of character.

Well-informed, coordinated support from the trust, governors and school leaders guides staff to do their best. In turn, staff feel very well supported. They appreciate leaders' work to ensure that the curriculum is well organised. They are clear about what to teach and when. They also appreciate being provided with the resources to teach the curriculum well. This helps considerably with their workload and means that they teach the right things.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established robust routines for making sure staff know how to spot concerns, and what to do in response. Staff record any concerns and allegations promptly, and leaders follow them up properly. This includes leaders quickly sharing information with other professionals when necessary.

Staff teach pupils how to spot and avoid risks. They make sure pupils know about safe, respectful relationships and what to do if they are uncomfortable, worried or upset about anything.

Leaders carry out all the required checks on adults in school. Procedures for managing medicines and any accidents in school are clear and effective.

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	143782
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10256860
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	380
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Simpson
Executive Headteacher	Joanna Turner
Website	www.lapal.dudley.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy and became a founder member of the Hales Valley Trust, a multi-academy trust (MAT), in February 2017.
- The school provides before- and after-school childcare on the school site.
- Leaders do not currently 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 first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, science, design and technology, and languages. In these subjects, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of

lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work.

- The inspectors also considered curriculum design and effectiveness in other subjects, to check how they were organised and taught. These subjects included history, geography, art and design, computing and religious education. The lead inspector observed some pupils reading.
- The inspectors looked at published performance data about the school and a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the curriculum, governance, extra-curricular activities and school improvement planning. They also checked information published on the school's website.
- Inspectors asked school leaders, pupils and parents about safeguarding arrangements and safety routines. They examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records.
- 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 some parents at the start of the school day and visited the breakfast club.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class, at lunchtime, on the playground, at clubs and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, inspectors had formal meetings with the executive headteacher, other leaders, school staff, pupils, governors, trustees, the curriculum leader and chief executive officer from the MAT, Hales Valley Trust.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Sutton	Ofsted Inspector
Lindsay Nash	Ofsted Inspector

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