

Inspection of a good school: Wickersley Northfield Primary School

Northfield Lane, Wickersley, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S66 2HL

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2023

Outcome

Wickersley Northfield Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders at Wickersley Northfield establish high expectations of pupils' behaviour and academic success. A pupil told an inspector, 'Our teachers are always trying to push you to do your best.' This starts in early years, where teachers establish consistent behaviour routines. They create a rich environment for learning. Pupils respond well to this and are eager to learn.

Pupils are well behaved in lessons and at playtimes. They understand what bullying is. Bullying seldom happens and pupils feel safe in school. Pupils know which adults they can talk to about any concerns. However, a few pupils are less confident than others in speaking with adults. Leaders are ensuring that other strategies are being put in place, such as 'worry boxes', so that all pupils have the opportunity to express themselves.

Pupils enjoy the wide variety of visits linked to the curriculum, such as those to the nearby space museum and sculpture park. Leaders also draw on the knowledge and skills of visitors to school to inspire pupils. These include authors, illustrators and historians.

Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to express their views and influence others. In their work on the 'Hate Crime Charter', pupils created the campaign motto, 'Happiness not Hate.' This phrase is now being used by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council as a signpost for change.

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

Leaders are successful in preparing pupils for their next stage in education. Learning to read is a priority. In Nursery, pupils learn the pre-skills for reading. Leaders ensure that teachers deliver a highly structured phonics programme consistently. Teachers receive regular training updates and feedback from the subject leader. Staff are adept at checking pupils' learning and identifying their next steps. Some pupils have extra phonics sessions to boost their confidence. Throughout school, teachers introduce pupils to a rich variety of books. These reflect different cultures and viewpoints. Pupils actively choose to read

books written by a range of authors. They happily recommend books to other pupils. Pupils are appreciative of the revamped libraries and the reading competitions.

In mathematics, staff are well supported by the subject leaders. There are clear expectations of what pupils will learn and when. Pupils recall their prior learning at the start of each lesson. Teachers focus this activity on the knowledge required for the next mathematics topic. Teachers also recap areas of learning that pupils have found difficult in the past. Some pupils struggle with multiplication tables in the older year groups. This affects how quickly and accurately they complete some calculations. Leaders have identified this issue and have plans in place to address it.

Leaders have recently revised other curriculum subject areas to ensure there is sufficient challenge. In history, leaders have identified the concepts that will be taught and when. Teachers have detailed guidance on the content of the curriculum, with matching resources. Staff adapt the delivery of the curriculum to suit the needs of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities work alongside their peers. They have tailored learning activities. Teachers encourage pupils to talk about their learning, for example when comparing the lives of Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale. Pupils remember their learning well.

Leaders encourage pupils to be respectful to all, including those of different backgrounds and faiths. Pupils are highly knowledgeable about the protected characteristics, such as disability. They have a strong sense of justice. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities. The eco warriors raise awareness of environmental issues. They run campaigns such as recycling batteries and book swaps. Pupils take part in a variety of after-school clubs.

Leaders promote positive behaviour from early years onwards. Pupils willingly follow school routines and instructions from teachers. Pupils are polite and cooperate well with one another. A new restorative method of managing pupil behaviour has been introduced. Pupils understand the new approach. However, the policy has not been communicated well enough to parents and carers. Some parents believe the system does not work for a minority of pupils.

Relationships are positive between staff, pupils and parents. However, some parents would like better communication with school leaders.

Subject leaders are well trained. They are keen to make further improvements. Leaders check and adjust the revised curriculum. Senior leaders meet with other school leaders in the trust. They challenge each other and share developments across the trust. The governing body has a thorough understanding of its role. Governors and officers from the trust actively challenge senior leaders about school improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders undertake all the required pre-employment checks for staff. However, a few members of staff have not been included in whole-staff training on child protection

procedures and safeguarding. This includes training on the 'Prevent' duty. Some new governors are yet to undertake safeguarding training but will do so next term.

Staff know their pupils well. They identify any changes in pupils' behaviour, which may indicate a safeguarding concern. Leaders make referrals to external agencies.

Pupils learn about keeping safe both online and offline. Year 6 pupils appreciate their visit to Crucial Crew, a practical workshop on everyday safety, organised by emergency services.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The intent and ambitions of the revised curriculum for foundation subjects are clear. However, there have been limitations in the previous curriculum structure. As a result, there are gaps in pupils' learning in some subject areas such as history. Leaders should fully implement all the new curriculum plans and ensure that these are embedded. Leaders should also identify any gaps in pupils' learning from previous years and include opportunities to catch up in the revised curriculum.
- Some parents expressed concerns about communication with school. This is having an impact on how these parents view the school. Leaders should ensure that communication procedures are reviewed and improved.
- Some members of staff are not included in the regular safeguarding training. Those new to the governing body have not received safeguarding training in a timely manner. This means that some staff members are not fully equipped to deal with any safeguarding concerns that may arise. Some governors do not have the required background knowledge to hold leaders to account. Leaders should ensure that all staff are included in safeguarding training and that those new to governance complete training offered as part of their induction.

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 October 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

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| Unique reference number | 141337 |
| Local authority | Rotherham |
| Inspection number | 10255809 |
| 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 | 452 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Phil Marshall |
| Headteacher | Claire Williams |
| Website | www.wickersleynorthfieldprimary.co.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 24 and 25 October 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Wickersley Northfield is part of the White Woods Primary Academy Trust, a multi-academy trust with 12 other schools.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils.
- The school does not use any alternative education 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. Meetings were also held with subject leaders, class teachers and pupils.
- The inspector met with representatives of White Woods Primary Academy Trust and members of the local governing board.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson

visits with leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at books and samples of work.

- Prior to the inspection, the inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. The inspector spoke with pupils about their views on the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector spoke to staff and governors. A range of safeguarding information was scrutinised, including the school's policies and records. The inspector spoke to pupils and observed relationships between pupils and adults. The inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey and Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. The views of staff were taken into account through a number of meetings as well as their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Mary Cook, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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