

Inspection of Northleigh CofE Primary School

St. Peters Road, Cowleigh Bank, Malvern, Worcestershire WR14 1QS

Inspection dates: 8 and 14 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

It is an exciting time for pupils at Northleigh CofE Primary School. Many effective changes have taken place. Committed leaders have high aspirations and expectations for all pupils. These are realised and pupils are thriving at this school.

Leaders and staff use the bible quote, 'Be brave, be strong, be fearless' in all their work with pupils. Pupils embody these characteristics as a result. They do not give up easily when they find something hard. Pupils help each other to be the best they can be.

Relationships between staff and pupils are caring and respectful. Older pupils play with younger pupils at lunchtime. Any incidences of unkind behaviour or bullying are not tolerated and dealt with effectively. Pupils are happy and safe. They can name trusted adults who will help them. Pupils use their class 'worry monsters' when they feel sad or anxious.

Leaders want pupils to be independent learners and thinkers. They have created an effective curriculum to support this. However, not all areas of the curriculum are fully established. This means in some subjects, pupils do not have the subject-specific knowledge they need. Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is variable. Pupils cannot always explain their mathematical reasoning as a result.

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

Ambitious and dedicated leaders have made many improvements across the school. This includes a newly constructed curriculum. Leaders are well supported by governors and trustees in implementing these changes. They are committed to offering pupils a broad curriculum and a wide range of experiences.

Leaders have set out the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary they want pupils to learn. The curriculum builds on this knowledge over time, starting from the early years. Most subject leaders know their curriculum areas well. They know how successfully pupils are learning in their subjects, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Subject leaders know how to support pupils in these subjects. However, some other subjects are not as well embedded. For example, in art and design, pupils confuse subject-specific knowledge with other similar subjects.

Teachers implement most of the curriculum consistently. They regularly recap on prior learning. Many subjects are now well established. Pupils know more and remember more in these subjects, as a result. For example, in science pupils know how changing one variable in an electric circuit will change the brightness of a lightbulb. Older pupils remember what they learned in previous years and how this knowledge helps them with their learning now. Information is presented clearly in most subjects. However, in mathematics, teacher subject knowledge is variable.

Pupils' misconceptions are not always addressed. Pupils know simple techniques for solving calculations. However, they do not understand deeper mathematical concepts. This slows down their progress.

Pupils with SEND learn alongside their peers. They are well supported and cared for. There is a strong culture of inclusion. Systems for identifying pupils with SEND are secure. Parents are involved from the start of this identification process.

Reading is a high priority across school. Staff are passionate about pupils developing a love of reading. Pupils read a wide and diverse range of books. Staff teach phonics accurately. Misconceptions are addressed most of the time. Children in Nursery learn how to recognise sounds and join in with nursery rhymes and songs. Leaders regularly check the fluency and accuracy of pupils' reading from the early years to Year 6. Books accurately match pupils' reading ability. Pupils who need more support receive effective, regular extra reading opportunities.

Behaviour around school is calm and orderly. During playtime, there are a range of activities for pupils. Pupils work hard in lessons and most concentrate well. Behaviour is dealt with consistently across the school. When pupils need some help with their behaviour, leaders offer appropriate support. Pupils attend school regularly.

Pupils experience a wide range of opportunities. They are given responsibilities such as 'reading ambassadors' and 'young leaders'. Pupils vote for their pupil parliament. This teaches them about democracy and citizenship. Pupil candidates prepare and present their manifestos to the whole school. They also learn how to perform in front of an audience. The curriculum teaches pupils about the similarities and differences between different religions and cultures. Pupils show kindness and respect to everyone, as a result. Mental health of pupils is taken seriously by leaders. Support is given quickly to those who need it.

Trust leaders and governors know the school well. Most staff feel supported with workload when changes are being implemented. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about their children's experiences at school. They speak highly of the leadership team and staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. Trustees and governors regularly check the safeguarding procedures in school. They use this information to continuously improve their practices. Staff understand the contextual risks for pupils. They act quickly when concerns are raised. Leaders work closely with agencies to give families support. Leaders carry out robust checks when employing staff.

The curriculum teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe. They learn about different technologies and the online dangers they may present. This information is also shared with parents. Pupils are confident to speak to staff if they are worried.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some changes to the curriculum have only been implemented recently and are not yet implemented as effectively as other subjects. Pupils do not know more and remember more of the subject-specific knowledge in these subjects, as a result. Leaders need to continue their work on embedding the new curriculum and ensure it has an impact on pupils' subject-specific knowledge.
- There is some variability in teacher subject knowledge in mathematics. Pupils lack depth in reasoning and understanding of mathematical concepts, as a result. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the necessary subject knowledge in mathematics to deliver the curriculum more effectively.

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	147284
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10256817
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sharon Tilki
Headteacher	Sarah Green
Website	https://www.northleighprimary.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is the first inspection since the school converted to an academy in April 2020.
- The headteacher is currently providing leadership support to a local school not within the trust
- Northleigh CofE Primary School is one of five schools within the Mercian Educational Trust (MET).
- The school do not use any alternative provider.
- The school has a breakfast club, an after-school club and school holiday provision on site. This is operated by the school.

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 school leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors visited the school on 8 March but was then paused because the school was closed due to adverse weather. The inspection concluded on 14 March.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and chief executive officer of the trust. She met the chair of trustees, vice chair of governors and other members of the trust board and governing body.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of other leaders to discuss safeguarding, early years and provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, art and design and physical education. 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 also looked at additional subjects, including science, geography and English.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school.
- Safeguarding documents were reviewed, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children. The inspectors examined how staff implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively across the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text responses received during the inspection.
- The lead inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records and minutes of meetings and visits by governors.

Inspection team

Anna Vrahimi, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Russell Hinton	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Satchwell	Ofsted Inspector

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