

Inspection of Dodford First School

Fockbury Road, Dodford, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 9AW

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils very much enjoy their learning at Dodford First School. Staff know them as individuals in this small community. This helps staff to care for them and to make sure they learn well.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. From the start, pupils settle into a calm and orderly classroom routine. They are keen to succeed, work hard and collaborate well with each other. Disruption to learning is rare.

Pupils enjoy warm relationships with staff. Staff provide a high quality of pastoral care and take effective steps to promote pupils' mental health. Pupils know that there are always adults to talk to, and that any bullying will be resolved straight away. Pupils feel safe, and play happily at social times.

Leaders have given careful consideration to the knowledge that pupils need before moving on at the end of Year 4. The curriculum is broad and ambitious. Pupils enjoy reading widely and learn well. School trips, such as visits to places of worship, enrich pupils' learning.

The curriculum also promotes pupils' personal development. Pupils can influence how the school runs. They take on roles, for example on the 'green team' or as members of the school forum.

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

Leaders ensure that learning to read is a high priority. Pupils follow a structured phonics programme from the start of the Reception Year. They learn letters and their sounds in a logical order. Staff ensure that pupils read frequently to an adult. They check how well pupils learn. Staff provide effective support for any pupils at risk of falling behind, and track how quickly they catch up. Books for younger pupils are well matched to their phonics knowledge. Pupils become confident and enthusiastic readers by the time they leave the school.

Pupils study all the subjects in the national curriculum. Leaders have recently made changes to ensure that pupils learn all the knowledge in each subject that they need. Subject leaders design learning well so that it builds on what pupils already know. Teachers plan the day-to-day learning for pupils so that they meet leaders' longer-term learning aims. Pupils' learning moves easily from one key stage to the next. Nevertheless, there is some uncertainty about how best to teach mixed-age classes when the new curriculum enters its second year.

Teachers know their subjects. They identify the key vocabulary and present knowledge clearly. Teachers check on what pupils know and remember, and take steps to fill any gaps in pupils' learning. Pupils learn well, in part because the work truly interests them, and they want to learn more. For example, in history, pupils remember the events and circumstances of early British history and can arrange

them in chronological order. In mathematics, pupils use practical equipment to support their understanding.

Leaders identify additional needs accurately. They ensure that teachers know about how to adapt learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teaching assistants make a highly effective contribution to learning. This helps to make sure that these pupils learn well.

Staff manage pupils' behaviour consistently from the start of the early years. As a result, pupils behave well. They show consideration for each other, and courtesy to adults. Pupils concentrate well in lessons. When they are invited to do so, they work effectively together and discuss teachers' questions eagerly.

Pupils follow a planned programme of personal and social education that teaches them about healthy relationships and how to treat others. Leaders know the importance of teaching about different traditions and cultures, and pupils learn about this in several subjects. Staff provide support for pupils' mental health. For example, mood boards in the classroom help adults to know if a pupil is upset.

A high proportion of pupils take part in sport after school, tend the garden or enjoy piano lessons. They learn from the opportunity to take responsibility and serve others.

Senior leaders have rightly focused on the issues identified in the previous inspection report. They have made good use of support from the local authority in addressing them. Subject leaders have planned the curriculum with skill and care. They are keen to improve it further and would value more training on how to do so. Staff say that leaders listen to their views and consider their workload.

Following a period of turbulence, the governing body was strengthened significantly in February 2023. Current governors are experienced and insightful, and are now holding leaders to account. They are well placed to provide effective oversight of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained in identifying the risks to pupils, and update their guidance frequently. Staff are vigilant and know how to raise a safeguarding concern. Leaders take the right action to support any pupil who may be vulnerable. This means that children and families receive the help that they need.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including from any risks they meet online.

Leaders make the necessary checks on those who join the school and record them accurately. Governors provide effective oversight of safeguarding arrangements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In foundation subjects, leaders have not finalised how teachers will continue to implement the curriculum in mixed-age classes. Leaders should ensure that they provide clear guidance to staff on how all pupils' learning in these subjects can build upon what they already know and understand over time.
- Subject leaders have not completed their evaluation of all the subjects for which they are responsible. As a result, they have not been able to make the amendments that would improve learning further. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders have a good understanding of each of the subjects that they lead, and how staff can best implement them in the school.

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	116670
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10256832
Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Wilkes
Headteacher	Lisa Parkes
Website	www.dodford.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 March 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Dodford First School educates children from Reception to the end of Year 4.
- A breakfast club and an after-school club are run on the school site by another provider.
- Leaders do not make use of 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 second 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders.
- The chair, vice chair and one other governor met with the lead inspector. The lead inspector spoke over the telephone with a school improvement adviser.

- The inspectors spoke with pupils at social times, and with groups of pupils more formally.
- The lead inspector looked at the school's procedures for recruiting and checking on staff suitability to work with children when inspecting safeguarding. He also considered the effectiveness of staff training and the procedures to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' plans to improve the school and records of governing body meetings. They also reviewed the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents. Inspectors met with parents outside the school on both days of the inspection. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and history. For each deep dive, an inspector discussed the curriculum with the subject leader, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. An inspector also spoke to leaders and scrutinised pupils' work in some other subjects.
- An inspector listened to a sample of pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 reading.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Paul Whitcombe

Ofsted Inspector

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