

Inspection of Netherbrook Primary School

Chester Road, Netherton, Dudley, West Midlands DY2 9RZ

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Netherbrook Primary is a community where pupils feel confident and valued. They enjoy coming to school. Learning is often exciting and inspires enthusiastic learners. Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They want the very best for every child. Pupils rise to fulfil these ambitions.

Well-being and positive mental health are priorities. Parents and carers told inspectors that this is a place where their child is well cared for. Staff and pupils are respectful of each other. Lessons and playtimes promote a sense of calm. Pupils say that there are always staff who will help them when needed.

Not a moment is wasted for pupils at Netherbrook. Different councils and ambassador roles provide opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility. Trips to places such as the Royal Opera House help pupils to develop an understanding of the arts and the world around them. Litter picking and raising money for local hospital wards inspire pride in the local community of Dudley.

Caring and nurturing relationships underpin all that is good at the school. Consequently, behaviour is calm and purposeful in lessons and at other times. Pupil anti-bullying ambassadors inspire others to act when they feel that bullying might be happening.

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

Since the last inspection, leaders have been tenacious in improving the curriculum. Supported by the academy trust, they have driven necessary improvements swiftly. Subject leaders are now increasingly involved in the development of their subjects. Mathematics and phonics are now strengths of the curriculum.

In most subjects, there is a clear expectation for what pupils should know and when. Sequences of lessons build knowledge about curriculum themes over time. For example, in physical education (PE), pupils have built, over a series of lessons, an understanding of the importance of exercise and how this helps the body. However, learning is not as well sequenced in a few other subjects, such as history or geography. This means that some pupils struggle to understand how their current learning fits in with what they have learned in the past.

In some lessons, pupils are helped to link their knowledge to different subjects. This makes future learning easier as pupils see links with other things they have learned and will learn. For example, in art, teachers skilfully use artists such as Jacob Lawrence to inspire not only the use of shape and colour but also awareness of how our personal history might affect how we think. However, in other lessons, these opportunities to link different subjects are not as carefully planned. This means that pupils sometimes find it challenging to build a deeper understanding of the whole curriculum and then apply this knowledge to future learning.

Leaders carefully monitor what pupils have learned and understood in lessons. When needed, they are quick to create opportunities to help pupils to catch up. In most lessons, teachers work hard to spot when a child might be having difficulties and provide the right support in that moment. However, at times, teachers do not check pupils' understanding and act to correct misconceptions.

From the time that pupils start at the school, reading is prioritised. Well-trained staff listen carefully to pupils read so they can spot errors and act accordingly. They talk with pupils about what they have read and understood. Consequently, pupils talk excitedly about the books they are reading or have read in the past. On those rare occasions when pupils fall behind, staff act quickly to provide the necessary support to help them catch up.

Ambition is high for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff are well skilled to spot when a pupil might need additional support. Leaders then work hard to understand the needs of the pupil so the right support can be put in place. Specialists such as educational psychologists are used to gain a strong understanding of the needs of the pupils.

Children in the early years get off to a great start at Netherbrook. Caring and supportive staff work hard to help children develop an excitement for learning. An impressive outdoor learning space enriches all areas of the curriculum. Consequently, the children are well prepared for more challenging learning in Year 1.

Leaders and staff combine to help pupils be ready for life in modern Britain. Lessons help pupils to understand what it means to be healthy or to be responsible citizens of the Dudley community. Positive mental health is promoted, for example through the teaching of meditation and relaxation.

Staff feel proud to be members of this community. They are positive about the support they receive from leaders in terms of their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are rigorous in ensuring that staff who share their high expectations for keeping pupils safe are appointed. Frequent training reminds staff of their safeguarding responsibilities. When needed, staff act promptly to raise concerns with leaders. Leaders are swift to act to address these concerns. When needed, they work closely with external services to support pupils and families.

Lessons develop pupils' understanding of how to stay safe, both online and offline. For example, pupils are confident to talk about the dangers of social media or online gaming and what to do if they feel unsafe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not yet ensured that subject knowledge is well sequenced to build pupils' understanding of the key themes linked to that subject. This means that some pupils struggle to know how current learning relates to things they have learned in the past. Leaders need to ensure that all curriculum plans are precisely sequenced to deepen the pupils' understanding of the key themes linked to that subject.
- In some lessons, teachers do not routinely check on the pupils' understanding and address misconceptions. This means that some pupils find learning confusing and find it difficult to remember what they have learned. Consequently, some pupils are not well prepared for the next steps in learning. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers check what the pupils have learned and understood in all lessons and make appropriate adaptations to the implementation of the curriculum when needed.
- In some lessons, teachers do not consistently provide opportunities for pupils to apply their learning to the broader curriculum or what they have learned elsewhere. This affects how well the pupils make links between different subjects and apply knowledge to future learning. Leaders need to ensure that all staff consistently provide opportunities for pupils to link learning to different aspects of the curriculum so they can deepen their understanding and ability to apply their knowledge.

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	144079
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10256838
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	505
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tim Coulson
Headteacher	Phil Rawlings
Website	https://www.netherbrook.dudley.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 March 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school joined The Elliot Foundation Academy Trust in June 2022.
- At the time of the inspection, the substantive headteacher was away from school due to an injury. In the interim, the deputy headteacher was acting headteacher.

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. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, art, PE and history. In these subjects, they visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, and talked with pupils and staff about how these subjects

were taught. Inspectors also looked at other subjects in less detail to check how they were planned and taught.

- Inspectors asked pupils, staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They scrutinised the employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records. They also found out about health and safety procedures and routines.
- Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, governors, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally with parents, carers, pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the academy trust.

Inspection team

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Catherine Young	His Majesty's Inspector
Sam Cosgrove	Ofsted Inspector

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