

Inspection of Coalbrookdale and Ironbridge CofE Primary School

Dale End, Coalbrookdale, Telford, Shropshire TF8 7DS

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 12 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

During recent years, governors have not supported leaders well enough. This means that school leaders have not been able to move the school forward as quickly as it could have. Despite this, leaders have successfully raised the expectations of what pupils can achieve. They are beginning to put together an ambitious curriculum. However, this is at an early stage, and there is more work needed to ensure that staff are clear about what pupils need to learn.

Most pupils feel happy and safe. They say that if bullying occurs, staff will deal with it. Pupils generally behave well. Pupils and staff are positive about the new behaviour code, and they feel it has improved behaviour because expectations are clearer. However, the new policy is not always implemented as consistently as it could be.

Pupils are kind and caring, and they show good manners. They are proud of their school, and they relish the many roles and responsibilities they take on, such as bullying ambassadors, play monitors and value ambassadors. The school's learning council takes an active role in making decisions about the school. For example, its members helped to design the lunch menu.

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

Over recent years, governors have not been effective in supporting the school. Governors often focus too much on the day-to-day running of the school and have not maintained a strategic overview. This means that they have not focused on the key aspects that will develop the school. This has, at times, hindered the school's improvement journey.

Nevertheless, after a period of significant staffing changes, the school is now improving. Over the past few years, leaders have successfully identified and tackled key weaknesses. This started with safeguarding. A strong safeguarding culture is now in place across the school. Other areas of the school have not improved as quickly. However, current leaders are astute and have identified the right areas for development, and they are addressing these weaknesses at pace.

The school's curriculum has undergone a period of development. While subject leaders have ensured that the curriculum in their subjects is sequential and ambitious, it does not yet precisely identify what pupils need to learn. This means that, at times, the activities that teachers plan do not match the intended learning because staff are not clear about what it is the pupils need to know.

However, the teaching of reading and mathematics is stronger. There is an embedded culture of reading across the school. Pupils are exposed to a range of different text types. These books enable pupils to learn about complex literary features, such as archaic language. Most staff are knowledgeable about the teaching

of phonics. Staff ensure that any pupil who falls behind gets the help they need to catch up. This helps pupils to become proficient readers.

School leaders have established an inclusive culture for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND are identified early, so support can be put in place quickly. However, there has been a lack of training and help for staff to enable them to support pupils with SEND effectively. Leaders are implementing training to ensure that all staff have the right skills to be able to support pupils with SEND more effectively, so they achieve better outcomes.

Leaders have thought carefully about how to support pupils' personal development. Pupils, including those with SEND, attend a range of clubs and activities, such as choir and gardening. Pupils represent their school in a variety of sports competitions. Pupils learn how to keep safe online, eat healthily and maintain healthy relationships. They are tolerant and respectful. However, they do not have a depth of knowledge about concepts such as culture, religion and race. They can talk about Christianity with confidence but their understanding of other religions is superficial. This means they are not fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils usually behave well. In the early years, children are taught how to speak nicely to each other, use manners and how to work cooperatively. Children settle in quickly and behaviour and routines are well established.

Relationships with some staff, parents and carers are, at times, fragile because of the many changes that have happened over recent years. Leaders are aware of the need to continue to develop positive relationships with parents and staff. Leaders are conscious of staff workload and have made some inroads to address this, but staff feel there is still more to do.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- For a prolonged period of time, governors have not fully understood and carried out their roles and responsibilities effectively. This has led to governors being too focused on day-to-day activities and not maintaining a strategic oversight of the school. Governors should ensure that they develop a detailed understanding of their strategic duties and ensure that they support the leaders to move the school forward, while ensuring that they consider all leaders' well-being and workload.
- While some staff have had training to support pupils with SEND, the training has not had the intended impact. As a result, staff do not feel fully confident in supporting pupils with SEND, both with learning and behaviour. The school should

ensure that staff receive suitable training, so that they understand how to support pupils with SEND effectively.

- The school has not ensured that the curriculum is planned and taught consistently well, including in early years. As a result, pupils do not build and retain important knowledge and skills as well as they might. The school needs to ensure that the curriculum sets out how to build pupils' knowledge across the entire curriculum and that staff have the subject expertise to deliver the curriculum effectively.
- Some parents and staff have negative views of the school. Leaders need to continue to work with staff and parents to develop effective relationships and to continue to consider staff workload and well-being.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils have sufficient and meaningful opportunities to learn about diversity. This means that, while pupils learn to tolerate and respect difference, they do not have a secure understanding of other faiths, cultures and beliefs. Leaders should continue to develop purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about diversity across the curriculum.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	123542
Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	10267958
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lois Dale
Headteacher	Mandy Dhaliwal
Website	www.coalbrookdaleschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 October 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a Christian religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in October 2016. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant staffing changes. The current headteacher was appointed in January 2021. The deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and literacy leader have all been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the senior leadership team to discuss school development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design, and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The lead inspectors met with a group of governors and examined records of governors' meetings.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of Hereford.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were also considered, including through Ofsted's surveys.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Eve Morris, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Susan Hughes

Ofsted Inspector

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