

Inspection of Wallbrook Primary Academy

Off Bradleys Lane, Coseley, Bilston, West Midlands WV14 8YP

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 October 2023

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

The principal of this school is Lorna McGregor. This school is part of Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by a chief executive officer (CEO), Sir Mark Grundy, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Dennis.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is always a warm welcome at Wallbrook. Pupils are proud to attend this school; there is a real sense of acceptance for all. They come to school smart, feeling safe and ready to learn. Pupils contribute actively to the calm, purposeful and happy atmosphere in the school by treating each other respectfully and by taking on roles, such as becoming 'diversity, equality and inclusion' leaders.

The school's values of 'excite, explore and excel' thread throughout what happens here. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how well they behave. They are passionate about all pupils succeeding. They organise a rich variety of experiences for pupils to open their eyes to possibilities. These include visiting the opera, welcoming artists and authors into school and working with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

There is a strong sense of community here. Parents and carers appreciate the support that the school gives their children. They have noticed significant improvements in recent years. The school has been through several challenges over the past three years but has overcome these.

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

Leaders in school and from across the trust have put in place an ambitious and meaningful thematic curriculum which pupils thoroughly enjoy following. For all subjects, they have thought carefully about the order in which knowledge is taught. This is helping pupils to remember more and to deepen their understanding over time.

In mathematics, teachers present information clearly to pupils to help them understand concepts. Pupils revisit their previous learning regularly, enabling them to master skills. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, become confident mathematicians; they are able to explain and explore their thinking. When pupils need more help, teachers adapt the delivery of the curriculum effectively.

Teachers ensure that English lessons are engaging and build towards pupils producing meaningful pieces of work. Pupils try hard to develop their written skills and outcomes are improving. However, pupils' handwriting is inconsistent and often untidy. This prevents pupils from recording their ideas as fluently and accurately as they could.

In daily phonics lessons, children in the early years quickly learn the sounds that letters make and how to blend these together into words. Adults are skilled at noticing when pupils fall behind; they provide extra support to help them catch up quickly. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy reading and do so often. There is a large selection of high-quality books that pupils choose from.

Children get off to a flying start in the early years. The curriculum is broad and highly ambitious. It is carefully designed to suit the children. Teachers select activities that are engaging and precisely match what children need. Children display positive behaviours because of how well adults guide and support them to do so. Despite how early it is in their school career, they are happy, independent and confident.

On the whole, pupils behave very well. Classrooms are calm places. Pupils play together nicely at playtimes. The school's work to improve behaviour has been successful. Pupils' attendance has improved significantly over the past year, although remains low. The school has positive relationships with parents as a result of successful engagement in recent years.

The school provides many opportunities to develop pupils' wider development. Pupils take on roles such as becoming school councillors or junior librarians. Their understanding of equality is particularly well developed because of how well it threads through the school's curriculum. Pupils also take advantage of the many trips, visitors and after-school clubs that the school offers.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, know the school extremely well. They share a vision to make it as good as it can be. There is a forensic approach to establishing what is working well and a tireless, successful drive for improvement. They put in place plans to ensure that they are focused on what is most important. Support from across the trust has been highly effective in recent years. Staff receive constructive and timely support and training. They appreciate this, feel valued and thoroughly enjoy working at Wallbrook Primary Academy.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not adopted an effective approach to the teaching of handwriting. This means that pupils' written work is less tidy than it should be and lacks fluency and accuracy. The school should put in place an approach that all teachers apply consistently well so that pupils form letters correctly and confidently, enabling them to record their ideas fluently and accurately.
- Some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. As a result, they are missing out on the exciting curriculum this school offers. The school needs to find effective ways to further engage with parents and carers to improve pupils' attendance so that they do not miss out on learning opportunities.

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	147721
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10290670
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	271
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Dennis
Principal	Lorna McGregor
Website	www.wallbrookprimary.academy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became a sponsored academy in January 2021. It is a part of Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust.
- There has been a change of principal since the last full inspection of the predecessor school.
- The school does not use any 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, other senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- An inspector spoke with the chair of the board of trustees and met with the CEO and the chair of the local standards and performance committee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, English, history and music. 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 work.
- 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons at different times of the day and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. Inspectors also took account of responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including governors' minutes, school improvement plans and the school's website.
- An inspector spoke to parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Gareth Morgan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Justine Lomas

Ofsted Inspector

Nicola Price

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