

Inspection of Northfield Road Primary School

Northfield Road, Netherton, Dudley, West Midlands DY2 9ER

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 November 2023

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

The headteacher of this school is Nicola Bennett. This school is part of Stour Vale Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by a board of trustees, chaired by Joanne Williams. There is also a chief executive officer, Rachel Salter, who is responsible for this school and eight others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school are well cared for and their positive relationships with staff help them to feel safe. Pupils who have experienced difficulties with their behaviour, or those who have faced other issues, know that adults are there to help them and they do. Many pupils enjoy school and attend regularly and on time.

There have been significant changes at this school since the last inspection. In partnership with a highly supportive trust, the school has changed the curriculum. Pupils are now making better progress and outcomes have improved as a result. Not all improvements to the curriculum are yet fully embedded, but leaders' work is continuing to make sure it is being consistently delivered as intended.

Pupils understand the importance of including everyone at their school and know that differences are to be celebrated. This school knows the importance of providing a wide range of life experiences for their pupils and do so successfully. Pupils enjoy opportunities to sing at events and visits to places linked to their learning.

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

A strong partnership between the school and the trust has led to many improvements. Despite recent staffing changes and recruitment challenges, the school has maintained a focus on developing their curriculum in areas such as mathematics and in the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Some changes to the curriculum though are relatively new and are not yet being delivered consistently well across the school. The school and trust have an accurate view of what needs improving and they have shown capacity to make the necessary improvements.

The school has provided training for staff to support them to deliver the curriculum as intended. Such training has taken place over a long period of time and leaders have worked to make sure that new and less-experienced staff are equipped to deliver agreed approaches. However, staff do not consistently identify how well pupils are learning, and they occasionally miss opportunities to address misconceptions as they arise. This results in some pupils developing an insecure understanding of what they are learning.

The school prioritises children learning to read from the first days of being in Reception. Those at the early stages of reading use the strategies they learn in their phonics lessons to help them read unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 2, an increasing number of pupils can read fluently. A carefully selected range of books are found in class library areas and these books are linked to topics pupils' study in the wider curriculum. Many pupils report enjoying when their teachers share stories with them. Some are developing a love of reading outside of school and read regularly at home.

Many pupils with SEND are now better supported to access the same learning as their peers. New systems have recently been put in place to support staff to identify whether pupils have additional needs. Changes to individual pupil support plans now reflect how best to help these pupils with their learning.

Children in the early years settle well at school. The curriculum is designed to support their personal and social development, as well as helping prepare them for formal learning in reading and mathematics. The school is working to ensure that children become more independent when learning. However, some children are not ready for this yet and require more support to do so. The school know that there is work to do to improve the quality of interactions between children and staff to both promote and deepen children's learning.

Many pupils understand the importance of showing positive behaviour and reflect on recent improvements in classroom and playtime behaviour. In most classes, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. However, when learning is less structured, a few pupils do not behave as they are expected and this can result in them missing important information.

A well-planned personal development curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests. The school ensures that pupils get equal access to the clubs on offer. Many pupils attend sports, arts and music clubs. The school has worked to develop pupils' sense of civic responsibility. Junior PCSOs are trained by local police officers to support other pupils to be good citizens. Pupils understand that keeping themselves safe is important in society and online. They understand what are 'safe and unsafe secrets' and know that should they feel at risk that they should share their concerns with a trusted adult.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some recent changes in 'how' to teach specific subjects are not being delivered fully effectively by all staff. As a result, there is a variable quality of education, impacting on pupils' learning. The school should continue to support staff in understanding 'how' to deliver new approaches so that all subjects are taught consistently well.
- Some staff do not always insist on all pupils demonstrating good listening and concentration when learning. This leads to them missing important learning. The school should ensure that behaviour expectations are consistently applied.
- Some staff do not identify and address pupils' misunderstandings in learning well enough. As a result, misconceptions remain unaddressed and some pupils move

on without a secure understanding of their learning. The school should ensure that their approaches to assessment seek to find gaps in learning as they occur and address them as quickly as possible.

- In the early years, when children take part in continuous provision, opportunities for adults to consolidate previous learning and promote deeper understanding can sometimes be missed. As a result, the purpose of activities can be unclear to children and their encounters fleeting. The school should ensure that all adults are trained to support effective learning in the early years.

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 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	147155
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10290664
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	387
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joanne Williams
Headteacher	Nicola Bennett
Website	www.northfield.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection there have been a number of changes to the school's leadership team.
- This school uses one registered 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 met with a range of leaders, including those responsible for the curriculum, teaching and learning, the early years, behaviour, attendance, personal development and safeguarding.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives into early reading, mathematics, physical education, science and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to pupils about their learning and behaviour and considered samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- 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 spoke to the chair of trustees, the chief executive officer and other executive leaders from the Stour Vale Academy Trust.
- Inspectors met with the chair and one other member of the local governing board.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments from parents.

Inspection team

Antony Bradshaw, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gary Richards	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Hughes	Ofsted Inspector

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