

# Inspection of Astwood Bank Primary School

Church Road, Astwood Bank, Redditch, Worcestershire B96 6EH

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Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 2023

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

The headteacher of this school is Deborah Yarnold. This school is part of Shires Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Lee Gray, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Michael Maurice Thake.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Astwood Bank Primary School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. 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 of the predecessor school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Astwood Bank Primary School is an inclusive school. All pupils are welcomed by warm and friendly staff. Pupils, parents and carers feel they are part of an extended family. There is a strong community spirit at this school.

Leaders pay serious attention to developing pupils' character. All pupils have an extensive range of opportunities. This prepares them extremely well to become well-rounded citizens of the future. They actively support charities by raising awareness and money. The extensive range of opportunities includes pupils running a café for parents. As part of this work, pupils learn skills such as budgeting. The curriculum for pupils' personal development is exceptional.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. All pupils rise to these expectations and behave very well. They are proud to be part of the school. Pupils wear the school badge with pride. They know the importance of representing their school positively.

Children's education begins with the strong foundations provided in the early years. They are exceptionally supported from the very start. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well catered for. Their needs are identified early on.

Parents and the wider community speak positively of the school. They are highly supportive of leaders and staff. They feel great pride in their children attending Astwood Bank Primary School.

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

The curriculum is ambitious, including in the early years. It is well planned and carefully sequenced. This is particularly the case in mathematics. Pupils learn key knowledge across all subjects in a logical way. Leaders place a strong emphasis on continually reviewing and developing the curriculum. In addition, staff present the content set out in the curriculum clearly most of the time. However, in a minority of subjects, the work given to pupils does not consistently help them to achieve the aims of the ambitious curriculum. This means that pupils do not always learn the curriculum to the depth that leaders intend.

Teachers use effective strategies to check pupils' learning. They use questions effectively, model clearly and demonstrate secure subject knowledge. In music, teachers model technical language and performance skills well. Consequently, pupils develop a secure understanding of a range of musical terms, such as octave, stave and clef. They are able to perform confidently on tuned percussion instruments. In history, pupils talk in depth about cause and effect of key historical periods, such as the First and Second World Wars.

Systems to identify the needs of pupils with SEND are robust. Needs are regularly reviewed and securely met. Staff have a strong knowledge for how to adapt the classroom environment and the curriculum to meet their needs.

Reading is celebrated and prioritised across the school. The love and joy of reading are highly promoted. The curriculum is underpinned by the use of high-quality books and poetry. Pupils' love of reading is developed through a range of opportunities. These include visits from authors and poets, poetry competitions and a '15 book challenge'. As part of this challenge, each year group experiences a new set of 15 books, which are diverse and thought provoking. All of this means that pupils talk about books and texts with great enthusiasm. In addition, leaders prioritise the teaching of early reading. Phonics teaching starts as soon as children join in the early years. Adults quickly notice when pupils fall behind. They then arrange extra support to help these pupils catch up. As a result, most pupils learn to read well. However, in some parts of the school, there is inconsistency in how the phonics programme is being delivered. This slows down learning for some pupils.

Pupils behave exceptionally well at playtime and around school. A strong ethos of respect and kindness permeates the whole school. Pupils are polite and articulate. Older pupils act as positive role models for younger pupils. Older pupils feel a deep sense of responsibility in showing younger pupils how to conduct themselves. Relationships between staff and pupils across school are caring and extremely respectful. Pupils who need additional support to manage their emotions and behaviour are well supported. They receive targeted and nurturing care. This support helps these pupils to improve their behaviour and to understand their emotions better.

Pupils have a strong understanding of the difference they can make in society. They are considerate to the needs of others. They are kind and caring and treat everyone with respect. They know that showing these character traits will help to make the world a better place to live, both for themselves and others. Pupils have a wide range of extra-curricular clubs available to them. These include nurture, origami and 'Quidditch'. Some clubs are also designed and led by older pupils at lunchtime.

Trust leaders and governors know the school well. Staff say they are exceptionally well supported by the school and trust leaders. They feel that their professional development is taken seriously.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a minority of subjects, the work given to some pupils does not consistently enable them to achieve the aims of the curriculum. This means that pupils do not

always secure a depth of knowledge and understanding across all topics. The school should ensure that the work that teachers give to pupils is closely matched to the ambitious aims of the intended curriculum.

- In some areas of the school, there is inconsistency in how the phonics curriculum is being delivered. This slows down pupils' learning. The school should support staff to develop their expertise in delivering the phonics curriculum effectively.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140258
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256870
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	410
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Michael Maurice Thake
<b>Headteacher</b>	Deborah Yarnold
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.astwoodbank.worcs.sch.uk">www.astwoodbank.worcs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Astwood Bank Primary School converted to a standalone academy in October 2013. When its predecessor school, Astwood Bank First School, was last inspected by Ofsted, in March 2010, it was judged to be outstanding overall. The school then joined the Shires Multi Academy Trust in September 2023.
- The school changed from a first school to a primary school in September 2018.
- Since the last inspection of its predecessor school, a new deputy headteacher has been appointed.
- The school has a before- and after-school provision on site. It is run by an external company.
- Leaders do not currently make use of 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.
- ☒ The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, CEO, chair of the trust, chair of the governing body, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally with parents and carers.
- ☒ The lead inspector spoke with a school improvement advisor.
- ☒ Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, English, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed 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 looked at a sample of pupils' education, health and care plans.
- ☒ The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- ☒ Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils, formally and informally, about their learning and experiences at school.
- ☒ Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- ☒ 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 considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. Inspectors also looked at responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- ☒ Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, school policies, curriculum documents and SEND records.

## Inspection team

Anna Vrahimi, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Anna Smith

Ofsted Inspector

Keri Baylis

His Majesty's Inspector

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