

Inspection of North Worcester Primary School

John Comyn Drive, Worcester, Worcestershire WR3 7NS

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 February 2024

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

The headteacher of this school is Stuart Grimes. This school is part of The Rivers CofE 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, Matt Meckin, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andy Jobbins.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are friendly and happy in school. They enjoy learning and most attend regularly. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils know that they can talk to a trusted adult if they are worried about anything.

The school has high expectations of pupils and wants the best for them. This includes for pupils with complex additional needs. Staff work diligently to tailor support to ensure that all pupils achieve well. The vast majority do. However, there are some aspects of the school where these high expectations and ambition are not yet realised in practice. The school has identified these areas and plans are in place to improve consistency and achieve the ambition set.

Many pupils in school behave well. They know the difference between isolated unkind behaviour and bullying. They report that staff sort out any disagreements quickly. A minority of pupils struggle to manage their behaviour. Adults support these pupils to minimise the impact on their learning and that of others.

As a new school, community links are still evolving. However, a mutual partnership already exists with the adjacent care home. Pupils visit and entertain the residents, and residents reciprocate by hearing pupils read each week in school.

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

The school, in collaboration with the trust, has developed a coherent and well-sequenced curriculum. Pupils build their knowledge, skills and vocabulary in a logical order, from the early years through to Year 6. From the outset, staff ensure the curriculum focuses on promoting children's language and communication skills, alongside their physical and social development. This helps prepare children well for Year 1 and beyond.

Teachers regularly check what pupils know and remember in all subjects. They adapt their teaching where consolidation or further input is required. However, leadership in some subject areas and phases is still at an early stage of development. This means that some leaders do not have sufficient overview of what is working well and where improvements are needed.

The school ensures that reading is a key priority. High-quality displays help promote a love of reading. All classes have an hour of daily reading to practise and enhance the skills they learn. Children in the early years are exposed to a wide range of stories and rhymes to provide an early introduction to literacy. They quickly learn their letters and sounds as staff are well trained in teaching the school's phonic programme. Teachers check pupils' progress in reading regularly and adjust pupil groups accordingly. Where necessary, pupils are given extra help to catch up if they begin to fall behind their peers. The books that pupils read are well matched to their abilities.

There are successful systems in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school provides helpful resources and accesses specialist support to meet individual needs. This includes access to play therapy and visits to the sensory room to help pupils regulate their emotions and behaviour. While much of the provision for pupils with SEND is effective, there are some instances where expectations of pupils with more complex needs in lessons are variable. This is particularly for pupils who need more support in regulating their behaviour.

The early years curriculum provides a firm foundation for children to build their early essential knowledge and skills. Learning is active and fun, and children achieve well. Staff plan exciting activities to foster children's curiosity, such as exploring natural environments through forest school. However, there is occasional variation in the quality of provision in this key stage.

Pupils learn about diversity, equality and British values through lessons and assemblies. They demonstrate their understanding of these topics in their positive attitudes and actions. The school encourages pupils to take on additional areas of responsibility to develop early leadership skills and contribute to school life. For example, being part of the junior leadership team, eco committee or school council.

As the school grows, leaders are continuing to build an effective partnership with parents. Parents are invited to curriculum workshops and kept fully informed of school activities. They have positive views of the school.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working at North Worcester Primary. They feel supported and valued. Those new to teaching appreciate the coaching and mentoring they receive to help develop their practice. They feel well looked after and want to stay at the school.

The trust provides effective support and training for staff. It seeks the views of the local community through its advocate group and responds well to feedback provided. Trustees have an accurate view of the school's current strengths and areas requiring further development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some leaders are new to their roles and do not yet have sufficient oversight of their area of responsibility. This means they are unable to provide the support and challenge needed to ensure that all pupils, including children in the early years, make the progress they should. The school should ensure that all leaders have

the skills, knowledge and opportunity to monitor and evaluate their areas of responsibility.

- The school's expectations of some pupils with SEND are too low, particularly for those who struggle to regulate their behaviour. On occasion, a small number of pupils are allowed to regularly disengage from the lesson. This limits the progress they make. The school should ensure that all staff have the skills and expertise needed to adapt teaching successfully to meet the needs of these pupils so that they develop the resilience, perseverance and independence needed to achieve as well as they should.
- There are some minor inconsistencies in provision in the early years, including in curriculum implementation and expectations of behaviour. This means that some children do not get off to the strongest start possible. The school should ensure a consistency of approach in the early years through regular monitoring and evaluation.

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	147190
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10294661
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	285
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of the trust board	Andy Jobbins
CEO of the board	Matt Meckin
Headteacher	Stuart Grimes
Website	www.northworcesterprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is a new and growing school. It opened in September 2019 and is part of The Rivers CofE Multi Academy Trust.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2023.
- The school is two-form entry. Each year, another cohort joins the school in the early years. To date, there are 11 classes from pre-school to Year 4. When full, the school will have 15 classes and cater for pupils through to Year 6.
- 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 and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and trust representatives, including the chair of the board and chief executive officer of the trust.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. 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. The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors looked at records of attendance and behaviour. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and talked to them informally about behaviour, bullying, and welfare.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: checked the school's single central record; spoke to senior leaders about safeguarding procedures; took account of the views of 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.
- The inspectors considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. Minutes of trust meetings and notes from the school's advocate meetings were also scrutinised.
- The inspectors talked to parents at the end of the school day and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, and their free-text responses. They also reviewed the responses to the staff and pupil survey and gathered the views of staff and pupils through discussion.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, lead inspector His Majesty's Inspector

Tony Bradshaw His Majesty's Inspector

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