

# Inspection of a good school: Lower Farm Primary School

Bakewell Close, Bloxwich, Walsall, West Midlands WS3 3QH

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Inspection dates:

23 and 24 April 2024

## Outcome

Lower Farm Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enjoy their lessons at Lower Farm. Pupils feel safe and well cared for by staff whom they trust. One pupil commented, 'Everything about the school is amazing.'

The school has lofty expectations for pupils to reach their full potential. Pupils work hard in lessons and realise these high expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve particularly well in this school because of the high-quality extra support they receive. The school expects pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils to attain as well as their peers. Learning gaps are closing.

Pupils take on many extra responsibilities. These help them to become independent and grow in confidence through taking on roles such as head boy and head girl. Some pupils are digital leaders and place a great emphasis on supporting the well-being of their peers. Pupils want to play their part in the local community. Visits to a local care home have raised their awareness of caring for others in the community.

Around school and in lessons, pupils behave well. Occasionally, when pupils fall out, they like to resolve any difficulties without troubling the staff. They know the school behaviour rules and abide by them.

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

Children get off to a flying start to their education from a young age. The two-year-old children begin their learning and development journey as soon as they start school. The nursery and Reception classes set the children up well for their move into Year 1. The curriculum in all subjects is well integrated into what is learned in the early years. Many parents and carers commented on how well their children do after starting school.

Staff place a strong emphasis on making sure that pupils learn to read effectively. The school sees this as the key to learning in other subjects. The teaching of phonics is a priority for staff. Pupils read with confidence and fluency. Many speak about enjoying

reading quietly in the school library or 'reading cafe'. Careful tracking of pupils' phonics progress means staff quickly identify any pupils falling behind. They then help these pupils catch up rapidly. Staff are highly skilled in the teaching of early reading.

The curriculum has been transformed in the past two years. It is carefully sequenced to help pupils know and remember more as they progress through school. Outcomes in mathematics are particularly strong because of how well strands of learning link together. Knowledge organisers, recall and retrieval in lessons are tools that are being used effectively in many subjects to help pupils know and remember more. Teachers check carefully on how well pupils are learning. Occasionally, pupils forget key knowledge from previous lessons. This hinders their learning slightly. The school places great emphasis on pupils learning the correct vocabulary in subjects. A few pupils struggle to recall the correct terms in some subjects. This can inhibit their learning.

Pupils with SEND are confident and articulate. Their needs are identified skilfully. The support they receive is highly individualised. This helps pupils with SEND to successfully access the same learning as other pupils.

The school carefully tracks and analyses attendance to identify any emerging trends. Appropriate action is then taken. The school works well with a range of partners to tackle any attendance issues. Because of this, attendance has improved.

There are many extra opportunities for pupils beyond the classroom. The school uses these successfully to widen pupils' development. Aspirations for pupils are raised further because of the well-established links enabling pupils to work on projects with staff from a local grammar school and the University of Wolverhampton. In assemblies, pupils learn about different styles of music and enjoy exploring diverse artistic styles. Recently, pupils met a local fundraising hero from the Sikh community. He spoke with pupils about his work, his faith and raising funds for dementia sufferers. Such visitors typify how the school is widening pupils' horizons.

The school is well led and managed. Governors care about the quality of education. They check diligently that pupils are getting a good deal. The school has created a staff well-being group that takes suggestions to leaders regularly. Leaders act diligently on these suggestions, making any necessary changes to help reduce workload. Staff are appreciative of how leaders consider their well-being. Parents speak positively about the school. One parent typically commented, 'Lower Farm is an amazing school. Teachers and staff go above and beyond to ensure children are well cared for and challenged in all areas of the curriculum.'

## **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 few subjects, some pupils do not always remember key knowledge or vocabulary. This hampers them knowing and remembering more over time. The school should fully embed the learning of key knowledge and ensure that pupils understand key vocabulary.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2018.

## 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>	104169
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322724
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	470
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Nigel Ford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Rawlins
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lowerfarmprimaryschool.co.uk">www.lowerfarmprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	4 to 5 December 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The early years has a Nursery which includes provision for two-year-old children.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club managed by the governing body.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, members of the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders, the SENCo, school improvement consultant and groups of staff and pupils.
- The inspector met with representatives of the governing body including the chair.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector reviewed school documents, including those relating to governance, attendance and behaviour. The inspector also scrutinised leaders' plans for improvement and their assessment of the school's effectiveness.
- The inspector visited the school's breakfast club and spoke informally with pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Declan McCauley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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