

Inspection of Ashwood Park Primary School

Bells Lane, Wordsley, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 5DJ

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Ashwood Park is a school where everyone is made to feel welcome and valued for who they are. This is particularly noticeable in how deaf pupils from the Resource Base for the Deaf (RBD) are actively involved in all aspects of school life. Many pupils and staff use sign language to foster a strong culture of inclusion.

The school has raised its expectations around pupils' behaviour. Pupils understand why the '4 Rs' rules are important and are keen to follow 'The Ashwood Way'. They learn how to behave and interact well from Nursery onwards. Pupils of all ages play happily together at social times.

Pupils are keen to learn and are attentive in lessons. Many take pride in the work they produce. However, a significant number of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not achieve well by the time they leave the school.

Pupils are proud of their contribution to school life, including as 'Ashwood Ambassadors' and being part of the school council. They enjoy the clubs on offer and trips that take place, such as the Year 6 outdoor education residential. From the 'toddler library' to the diverse book selection around the school, pupils learn the enjoyment to be found in reading.

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

Children in the early years learn and develop well. The school has thought carefully about the foundations they want to secure for all children to be ready for the move into Year 1. Children benefit from discrete sessions in phonics, literacy and mathematics, alongside well-planned activities to support their learning through play. Staff skilfully support the development of children's language and communication.

The school has made reading a priority. The new phonics scheme is resulting in stronger outcomes. Those pupils who are not secure readers receive timely and appropriate support to help them make rapid progress.

There have been several changes to the curriculum in recent years, resulting in a broad and ambitious curriculum in place for all pupils. However, there is variation in how well teachers use this information to design and deliver sequences of learning for their classes. Pupils' learning does not always build sequentially. Sometimes, the key knowledge that pupils need to secure has not been identified. Sometimes, pupils' knowledge is not checked effectively, either at the point of learning or in formal assessments. As a result, some pupils move on before they have secured their learning and misconceptions go unnoticed.

Because pupils do not learn the curriculum to a consistently high standard over time, many do not achieve well in the end of key stage 2 tests. This includes a significant proportion of disadvantaged pupils. The school is working to address this, but

outcomes are not improving quickly enough. Many pupils leave the school without the secure reading, writing and mathematics knowledge they will need for future success.

The school ensures that any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities develop well academically and socially. Their needs are expertly identified. Staff make appropriate adaptations to their teaching to meet the needs of these pupils. The RBD 'pathways' ensure that deaf pupils can access the curriculum within mainstream lessons as much as possible. Staff support these pupils exceptionally well, enabling them to use communication methods and language most appropriate to their needs. Deaf pupils also learn about deaf culture and identity.

The school has worked hard to build a stronger culture around good attendance. Attendance of all groups of pupils has improved and is now broadly in line with the national average. Because of the supportive pastoral work that takes place, the number of persistently absent pupils has significantly reduced.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and understand the risks they need to be aware of. For example, they recently learned about water safety as the school is bordered by a canal.

Governors and school leaders work hard to support the pupils and families they serve. However, there has not been a rigorous enough focus on ensuring that pupils' outcomes improve quickly. There is not always a precise understanding of what needs to be improved and how progress will be checked to ensure improvements bring about the desired impact. There are areas of the school where this is done more effectively and improvements are evident, including aspects related to attendance and early years provision.

Parents and carers value the way their children develop at Ashwood Park. One parent, representative of many, said that their child 'always comes away smiling'. This was evident in the happy, chatty pupils that inspectors met.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is variation in how well the curriculum is designed and implemented at class level. Key learning is not always clearly identified or sequenced in a way to support the cumulative building of knowledge. Assessment does not always align with the key knowledge pupils need to master. As a result, pupils do not always secure each stage of their learning. Some gaps in learning or misconceptions go

unnoticed. This impacts how well pupils achieve. The school should ensure that all staff know how to implement the intended curriculum effectively.

- Not all leaders know their areas of responsibility well enough. In some subjects, there is not a secure understanding of how the intended curriculum is being implemented. Assessment information is not always used regularly enough to know how well pupils are learning and if any changes to the curriculum are needed in response. The school should support all subject leaders in strengthening their knowledge about the pedagogy and assessment specific to their subject area.
- The school knows that pupils' outcomes at the end of Year 6 are too low. Improvement plans often lack the precision needed and a sense of urgency. As a result, outcomes for pupils are not improving quickly enough, especially for those who are disadvantaged. Governors should ensure that the school improvement strategy is more precise, more rigorously monitored, and that there is a greater sense of pace to improving outcomes for all groups of pupils.

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	103818
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10294498
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	326
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Joanne Marchant
Headteacher	Keith Butler
Website	www.ashwood.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 June 2018 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher, Keith Butler, has substantive responsibility for the school. There is also a part-time co-headteacher, Jane Lister.
- The school includes a specially resourced provision for 20 deaf pupils. These pupils learn via the Resource Base for the Deaf and within the main school.
- The school has a nursery.
- The school runs before- and after-school provision on site.
- The school does not 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the co-headteachers, other school leaders and governors. They spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, English and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors listened to pupils read to a familiar adult and visited other lessons, including those in the early years.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including comments submitted via the free-text facility, and spoke to some parents in person.

Inspection team

Nicola Beech, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Carli McCallin

Ofsted Inspector

Martina Abbott

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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