

Inspection of a good school: North Walsall Primary Academy

Derby Street, Walsall, West Midlands WS2 7BH

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 June 2024

Outcome

North Walsall Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

The acting principal of this school is Natalie Deen. This school is part of the Academy Transformation Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sir Nick Weller, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Patricia Beanland OBE. Natalie Deen is also the director of primary education, who is responsible for this school and 10 others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at North Walsall Primary Academy and enjoy their lessons. They feel safe in school and are well cared for. Pupils can share any concerns they have through 'in-class worry boxes'. They know the staff will follow these up sensitively. Pupils speak very highly of the support and care they receive. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They steadfastly follow the behaviour rules which form part of the 'North Walsall Way'.

There are high expectations for all pupils in this school. Pupils work hard to reach these expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged achieve particularly well because of the high-quality extra support they receive.

Pupils are provided with many opportunities outside of lessons to build their confidence and independence. When travelling to the theatre on a school trip, pupils work out the train times and the cost of tickets. Pupils visit stores with staff and calculate which books they can afford to buy and the change they expect to receive. These activities typify the school's approach to developing life skills.

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

Nursery and Reception classrooms are enchanting places where children get off to a superb start to their learning. The staff team members in the early years focus intensely on the development of children's early language and communication skills.

Reading has an extremely high profile in this school. The school recognises that becoming a fluent reader is the key to successful learning. There is a strong focus on building vocabulary and developing children's understanding. Staff are well trained to teach early reading. The school ensures any children identified as falling behind in their phonics catch up quickly. As pupils progress through the school, they build reading stamina to become fluent readers.

The curriculum is structured effectively. Lessons are well taught, enabling pupils to achieve well. Music is a particular strength because of the careful way pupils build their knowledge of the subject. Pupils perform in their music lessons with gusto.

Lessons often begin with pupils recalling their prior learning. This helps to remind pupils about what they have learned previously and how they can make connections to current learning. The curriculum is carefully sequenced to help pupils know and remember more over time. However, sometimes, teachers' use of assessment is not as effective as it could be in building an accurate picture of pupils' learning.

The school has made improvements to how mathematics is taught. Recently, the school has introduced more opportunities for pupils to explain their reasoning when solving mathematical problems. This is helping pupils to develop a better mathematical understanding.

Pupils with SEND are exceptionally well supported, following careful identification by skilled staff. The delivery of the curriculum is carefully adapted so pupils with SEND can make good progress in their learning. The school has purchased extra speech and language support, which is helping pupils with their communication development.

The school is working hard to ensure that pupils attend regularly. As a result, attendance is improving. The number of pupils regularly absent from school is reducing because of the effective action taken by the school. Regular and improved attendance is rewarded with book vouchers.

Around the school, pupils are exceedingly polite and respectful towards each other and adults. Corridors and communal spaces, including the dining room, are quiet and calm. Lessons proceed well because pupils know how important learning is.

Pupils enjoy a broad range of extra-curricular experiences that support their wider development effectively. There are a variety of clubs available to pupils, which are well attended. Pupils are looking forward to their upcoming trip to the seaside. They enjoy the activities on offer in the school's breakfast club. Parents and carers appreciate the high-quality education the school provides. As one parent commented, representing the views of many, 'The staff in this school are really doing a fantastic job.'

Staff agree that leaders do all in their power to reduce their workload. The school benefits from the strong, strategic direction provided by the trust. Those responsible for governance rightly challenge and support the school to help it improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teachers do not use assessment well enough to check on how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. As a result, some staff do not build an accurate picture of what pupils can do and understand. The school should ensure that assessment is used well to inform pupils' next steps in learning so they make consistently good progress.

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 October 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

Unique reference number	144499
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10322903
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Patricia Beanland OBE
CEO of the trust	Sir Nick Weller
Acting principal	Natalie Deen
Website	www.nwpa.attrust.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Academy Transformation Trust.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club, managed by the governing body.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 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 acting principal, members of the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and groups of staff and pupils.

- The inspector met with representatives of the local governing body, the chief executive officer and deputy chief executive officer of the trust, and representatives of the board of trustees.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. 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.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View. The inspector spoke informally to parents outside the school. The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- 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, behaviour and attendance. The inspector also scrutinised the school's plans for improvement and an assessment of the school's effectiveness.
- The inspector spoke informally to pupils and visited the school's breakfast club.

Inspection team

Declan McCauley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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