

Inspection of Wilbarston Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Wilbarston, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 8QN

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 July 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Maria Hawkes. This school is part of Pathfinder Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Emma Simms, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Joanne Woods.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are excited to come to school. They enjoy their lessons because they say teachers make learning 'interesting and fun'. Pupils feel safe. They trust adults to help them if they need it. Pupils describe the school as being part of 'one big family'.

The school has high expectations for all pupils to achieve their best. Staff know the pupils very well and make sure that each pupil has what they need to thrive. Pupils benefit from support and encouragement. They appreciate the chance to develop their independence and work with their friends. They are very proud to share their achievements with others. Most pupils try their best and achieve well. This is particularly true for children in the early years.

Pupils enjoy exploring outdoors. Some of them organise their own activities, such as the craft and Pokémon clubs. They like taking part in sports competitions and music events. Opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles are growing.

Pupils behave very well and are respectful towards each other and the adults in school. They are considerate of others' views and are polite and welcoming to visitors. Pupils have lots of friends because they are kind and 'everyone knows everyone'.

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

The school has experienced some recent staff changes. The new team is united in its ambition for all pupils to do their best. The curriculum in many subjects has been refined. New approaches to the teaching of reading, mathematics and writing have raised expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils' outcomes in these subjects have improved as a result.

Recent changes have been made to what pupils learn in subjects in the wider curriculum, including history, computing and art. The school has thought carefully about how to organise what pupils learn in these subjects and when. Pupils enjoy learning new facts, for example about Queen Elizabeth I. However, while pupils can recall knowledge they have learned recently, they find it harder to remember information from further back. As a result, they struggle to make connections that could help them to understand more difficult concepts.

Teachers benefit from high-quality training. Their strong subject knowledge helps them to deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers make skilful use of demonstrations so that pupils know what to do when they work independently. Pupils are keen to take on challenges that help them to think more deeply about their learning.

Teachers use assessment well in some subjects. They ask useful questions to check what pupils know in these subjects. However, in a few subjects, teachers do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge carefully enough so that they can be resolved.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Teachers use resources effectively and adapt questions subtly so that these pupils are confident and achieve well.

The teaching of reading is a high priority. The phonics programme is taught with precision. Pupils learn to read with fluency and accuracy. Pupils enjoy choosing stories from the wide range of high-quality books that the school has purchased recently.

Children in the early years receive an exceptional start to their schooling. The early years environment is highly stimulating. Children get plenty of chances to problem-solve and develop their independence. Adults use their extensive range of knowledge and skills to help children apply their learning effectively.

Pupils behave very well and have positive attitudes to learning. They are determined to work hard to achieve their goals. An increased emphasis on attendance has helped some pupils who come to school less often than they should to attend more frequently.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is well structured. Pupils learn how to stay healthy and safe, and about positive relationships. They find out about other cultures and celebrate the fact that 'everyone is unique'. However, pupils are not sufficiently aware of events that affect them in the wider world. Opportunities to enrich the curriculum are quite limited.

The school's efforts to refine processes and improve consistency are having a positive impact. Staff know what is expected of them. They have been supported well during this period of change. Recent alterations to the school's governance structure are helping trustees and governors fulfil their roles effectively.

The school has introduced new opportunities to work closely with parents and carers, for example through open days and information events. However, while the number of parents with a positive view of the school is increasing, a minority of parents do not share the school's ambitious vision for its future.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- New curriculums in the foundation subjects are well planned. However, teachers do not always ensure that pupils have the prior knowledge they need before learning a new topic in these subjects. Pupils sometimes have gaps in their learning and struggle to make links between important information to help them deepen their understanding. The school needs to ensure that teachers check what pupils know about a topic and take this into account when planning and delivering new learning in the foundation subjects.
- The school is still developing some aspects of the personal development programme. Opportunities for pupils to benefit from enrichment activities are quite limited. Pupils do not have enough chances to learn about the wider world or to broaden their horizons. The school needs to make sure that the curriculum is supported by suitable experiences designed to enhance pupils' learning and their understanding of the world around them.
- The school has an ambitious vision for its pupils and what they can achieve. However, this vision is not realised fully because not everyone is working together towards a common aim. A few parents do not feel that their views are listened to or taken into consideration. The school must create a culture where all stakeholders feel valued and work together collaboratively to fulfil the vision.

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	140094
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10347578
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joanne Woods
CEO	Emma Simms
Headteacher	Maria Hawkes
Website	www.wilbarston.northants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school joined the Pathfinder Schools Trust in 2013.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is a Church of England school with a Christian ethos. It received its Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools in November 2021.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and with other leaders. The lead inspector met with those responsible for governance, including the chair of the local governing body and the chair of the board of trustees. The lead inspector also held a discussion with the interim CEO and deputy CEO.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss 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 heard some pupils read to a familiar member of staff. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and reviewed curriculum planning in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and at other times around school.
- 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 reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan and information about governance. Inspectors also considered information about pupils' attendance and behaviour, as well as the wider curriculum.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the results of Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Sarah Sadler, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Charley Oldham	Ofsted Inspector

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