

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Oval School

Whittington Oval, Yardley, Birmingham, West Midlands B33 8JG

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 October 2024

Outcome

The Oval School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Dawn Williams. This school is part of DRB Ignite 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 (CEO), Robert Bowater, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Sheldon.

What is it like to attend this school?

The Oval School is a happy school where everyone feels welcome. Pupils build positive relationships with the staff and each other. The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils achieve well and develop a deep body of knowledge across the curriculum.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They trust that staff will help them with any worries or concerns. This helps pupils to feel happy at school. Those pupils who need extra help in managing their emotions are supported well by caring staff.

Pupils enjoy their learning. They benefit from a variety of interesting and meaningful opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. For example, pupils learn about healthy living through growing their own vegetables in the school allotment. Pupils benefit from a range of clubs, trips and activities that help them to learn the curriculum and broaden their horizons.

Pupils value being able to make a positive contribution to their local community. For example, they sing to residents in local care homes and put forward their ideas to improve safety on the roads outside the school. Pupils are proud to support their peers through the leadership responsibilities they take on, such as becoming playground leaders and 'rights-respecting rangers'.

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

Supported by the trust, the school has put in place an inspiring curriculum that is both broad and ambitious. Starting from the early years, the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils need to learn are clearly set out. Pupils progress well through the curriculum. They are well prepared for their next stages.

Staff benefit from high-quality training and support that help them to deliver the curriculum consistently well. Teachers explain new concepts clearly and build in lots of opportunities for pupils to practise what they have learned. They check what pupils have understood and remembered regularly.

In line with the inclusive ethos of the school, pupils with SEND fully access the same curriculum as their peers. Recent and effective training has ensured that staff provide pupils with well-chosen resources and effective adaptations, as needed, to enable pupils with SEND to progress well through the curriculum.

From the early years onwards, reading is a priority across the school. Staff are well trained to teach reading effectively. Pupils who fall behind or join the school with early reading skills are provided with the extra help they need to become fluent readers. This is effective in enabling pupils to catch up quickly. Staff have considered carefully the books that pupils read across the school. They ensure that pupils experience a range of traditional and contemporary authors through their 'old and gold' and 'new and bold' book choices. Regular reading in class helps pupils to foster a love of books.

Developing early mathematics skills is also a priority. Staff expertly develop pupils' understanding of number through effective use of resources and visual representations. Staff's clear and effective modelling of language helps to develop pupils' mathematical vocabulary well.

Pupils' personal development is well considered. The school designs activities that broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world. Pupils celebrate diversity and show an awareness of the different cultures and beliefs of others. Pupils are encouraged to be active and benefit from a wide range of activities to keep them physically active throughout the school day and beyond.

The school has taken effective action to improve pupils' rates of attendance. Staff work with families to identify the barriers to pupils attending school and provide effective support. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved.

The school has established a new behaviour system that supports pupils to manage their feelings and emotions more effectively. Staff are adept at providing additional behavioural support for some pupils who need it. The 'Haven' provides pupils with a quiet, calm area for reflection and pastoral support. This helps pupils to adapt their behaviour. The school has seen the positive impact of this change, and the frequency of pupils being suspended from school has reduced significantly. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the

school. However, in some lessons, and occasionally at breaktimes, a small minority of pupils do not live up to the expectations of being 'ready, respectful and safe'.

Trustees understand the strengths and priorities of the school and carry out their role effectively. Staff benefit from a well-considered professional development programme and value the support they receive from the trust. They feel valued and enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small minority of pupils struggle to manage their feelings and emotions, which means that they do not always live up to the school's high expectations for behaviour and conduct. The school should ensure that all staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and apply the school's new behaviour approach consistently across the school.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, The Oval Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2013.

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	143087
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10344089
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	646
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Sheldon
CEO of the trust	Robert Bowater
Headteacher	Dawn Williams
Website	www.theoval.drbignitemat.org
Date of previous inspection	5 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the DRB Ignite Multi Academy Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO and other leaders from the trust. She also met with trustees.

- The inspectors focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: early English and mathematics, geography and religious education. For each group of subjects, the inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also examined pupils' work in art and design.
- 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' interest first.
- The inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff and pupils and considered the opinions expressed through the staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspectors met some parents at the start of the day and had regard to the views expressed through Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Cathy Young, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Price

Ofsted Inspector

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