

Inspection of Wistanstow C of E Primary School

Wistanstow, Craven Arms, Shropshire SY7 8DQ

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are enthusiastic and proud to attend this small village school. They build lasting friendships that they value. This gives them a strong sense of security and belonging. Pupils attend regularly and behave well. They start the day with smiles and laughter as they eagerly meet their friends.

The school's expectations of pupils' academic achievements have been too low in the past. Expectations are increasing, and changes are underway. Pupils now follow a curriculum that enhances their knowledge. However, the curriculum is not taught consistently well. Recent improvements to the curriculum have not yet impacted on pupils' knowledge. Some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not make sufficient progress to be fully prepared for secondary school.

Pupils understand the values that the school promotes and work hard to put them into practice. They display generosity to each other and people in the local community. For example, they support local charities, giving their time and resources to help others.

Pupils enjoy taking part in extra-curricular activities. They are eager to compete in sporting events and are especially proud of the significant achievements of the school's netball team. Such achievements have boosted pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

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

The school has recently taken action to revise the curriculum. Staff have identified the important knowledge that pupils are expected to learn. They have ensured that this knowledge progresses logically over time. However, pupils have not yet begun to study the new curriculum content in all subjects.

Staff are developing their subject knowledge, but there is still variation in adults' expertise. Sometimes, the explanations that teachers provide and the tasks that they set do not help pupils to learn well. For instance, pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to practise new learning. This means that the curriculum is not yet impacting on pupils knowing and remembering more in each subject.

The school identifies pupils who are struggling to access the curriculum. Pupils with SEND take part in lessons and access a broad range of subjects. However, the curriculum is not always adapted well enough to help these pupils learn well. Sometimes, pupils' specific needs are not sufficiently supported. This means that pupils with SEND are not progressing through the curriculum as well as they need to reach their full potential.

The school makes reading a priority. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read benefit from daily phonics lessons. Children in the early years begin to study phonics as soon as they start at school. Adults identify and support any pupils who fall behind in order to help them catch up. Pupils progressively learn new sounds and become better readers over time. However, there is variation in how well the phonics programme is delivered. Sometimes, children do not have sufficient opportunities to practise sounding out. This

means that some pupils do not develop their reading fluency as well as the school expects.

The school has not yet implemented an effective approach to monitoring the revised curriculum's impact on pupils' knowledge. Those responsible for school governance work hard to gather useful information about the school. They care about pupils and want the best for them. However, the information they receive about the quality of education is not precise enough. This means it is hard for the school to understand when and why gaps in pupils' knowledge emerge.

The school's expectations of pupils' behaviour are clear. Pupils appreciate their role in deciding classroom rules and they follow them. They listen carefully and focus on tasks in lessons. Lunchtimes and playtimes are happy occasions. Pupils get along well and take care of one another. This makes the school a calm and purposeful place for pupils to learn.

The school's work to ensure that pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain is a strength. Pupils discuss and understand a range of current affairs and topics. They understand the school's ethos, but also develop their knowledge of other cultures and faiths. The school's caring and respectful culture allows pupils to experience these values in action.

The school has been through a period of considerable change since the last inspection. There is now a clear vision for improvement. Staff are enthusiastic to help see this vision realised. They feel well supported in this aim. Most parents and carers acknowledge the positive changes, although the school recognises the need for further engagement to ensure that all parents feel included in its improvement journey.

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 staff's expertise. Where this is not strong, the explanations that adults provide and tasks that they set do not help pupils to learn key information as effectively as the school expects. The school should ensure that all staff know how to teach the curriculum well, so that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Pupils with SEND do not always receive the support that they need to make progress through the curriculum. Staff do not always make adaptations to help these pupils access new learning. As a result, support does not consistently have the impact that the school expects on pupils' knowledge. The school should ensure that the curriculum is adapted when necessary to ensure that pupils with SEND learn well.

- The school's approach to monitoring the impact of the revised curriculum on what pupils know and remember is not yet well-established. This means that those responsible for leadership do not have a precise understanding of when gaps form in pupils' learning or how to address them. The school should ensure that gaps in pupils' learning are identified quickly and addressed to support all pupils to achieve well.

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 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	123517
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10322768
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Simon James
Head of School	Sue Phillips
Website	www.edgeschoolsfederation.co.uk/wistanstow-ce-primary-school-home
Date of previous inspection	16 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Edge Federation. The federation consists of three rural primary schools.
- A single body is responsible for governance across all three schools.
- The head of school began full-time leadership of the school in September 2024. Before this, the head of school worked across two of the schools in the federation.
- An executive headteacher and a SENCo work across all three schools.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Hereford. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2024. The next inspection will be within five years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has three mixed-aged classes.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors 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 lead inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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 met with the head of school and the executive headteacher of the federation. The lead inspector also held discussions with those responsible for governance, a representative of the local authority, a representative of the diocese and the SENCo.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in a range of different classes and at different times of the day.
- Inspectors considered responses on Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. Inspectors also took account of responses to staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jonathan Leonard, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rob Bourdon-Pierre

Ofsted Inspector

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