

Inspection of Water Mill Primary School

Water Mill Close, Selly Oak, Birmingham, West Midlands B29 6TS

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love school life at Water Mill. They work hard and learn well. Leaders are aspirational for every pupil and seek to unlock their potential. The school's 'Owl-standing skills' and their values motivate pupils. On a daily basis, pupils reflect on the application of these skills and values.

Pupils are proud of their diverse school community. Diversity is built into the curriculum and celebrated. The school recently hosted an international week and invited parents along. They enjoyed a variety of experiences, such as playing musical instruments and sampling food from a range of countries.

Pupils value the education they receive and want to do their best. The school motto, 'Anything is possible', underpins pupils' aspirations to be prepared for and positive about the future.

The school's work to support pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils enjoy experiences that build their character. Pupils take on a range of extra responsibilities, for example being a school councillor and consulting with all classes about developing areas of the playground.

Around school, pupils are clear about the school's rules and routines. They behave well. Pupils are not worried about bullying. They feel safe and know they could call on any adult to help them.

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

The headteacher and her leadership team have made significant improvements across the school. Leaders have redesigned the curriculum, which is suitably ambitious. Leaders ensure that the curriculum enables all pupils to achieve well.

Children get off to a good start in their education. They learn phonics as soon as they start in the Reception Year. Teachers regularly check which sounds pupils can remember. Pupils who are not sure about a sound receive extra support to help them catch up quickly. Staff match reading books to the sounds that pupils know. This helps pupils to develop their confidence and reading fluency. Reading and a love of books are promoted throughout the school. Pupils read books by a range of authors. They know why it is important to be a good reader.

In mathematics, curriculum plans set out the key knowledge and skills pupils should learn, from early years to Year 6. Leaders ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of basic concepts. Pupils' books show that they learn content in a systematic way and know and remember more over time. Teachers benefit from training to help them teach mathematics well.

Subjects are taught through themes. Each theme overview breaks down the knowledge and skills taught as well as exciting activities. Subject leaders support their colleagues to develop the subject knowledge they need to teach. Most have a clear overview of what is going well in their subject and what needs to be done to improve it further. Some subject leaders, who are new to role, have only recently started to check the implementation of the curriculum. This means that they are not yet able to measure the effectiveness of the curriculum in their subjects. Leaders are working to improve this.

Teachers use assessments well in English and mathematics to find out what the pupils know and understand. However, in the foundation subjects, this does not always happen well enough, and teachers do not identify pupils' misconceptions quickly enough. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge.

The school is an inclusive community. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or those who speak English as an additional language do well in school. Leaders quickly identify any pupils with additional needs. Parents really appreciate the support that pupils with SEND receive.

Pupils behave well and enjoy their lessons. Leaders monitor pupils' punctuality and attendance closely. They take positive steps to improve the attendance of pupils whose rate of attendance is lower than that of their peers.

Throughout the school, teachers plan rich and exciting experiences for pupils. Pupils enjoy a variety of clubs, for example sports, movie making and science. They talk enthusiastically about how they organise events, such as the Jubilee party, for the whole school. Through all these experiences, their awareness of helping others and being a good citizen grows. All pupils have equal access to all opportunities offered.

Governors know the school well. They are proud of the role that the school has in the community. Governors use their knowledge effectively to hold leaders to account for all aspects of the school's work, including the quality of education. Governors are mindful of staff's workload and well-being. Staff feel valued and supported by leaders.

Parents and carers speak very highly of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders understand their role in keeping children safe. They ensure that staff attend regular safeguarding training. Staff record and report concerns swiftly. Concerns are followed up rigorously. Leaders make referrals to external agencies appropriately to get pupils the help they need, including when pupils need support for their mental health and well-being. Record-keeping is meticulous.

Suitable checks are made on all adults who work with the children in school. Pupils feel safe and happy here, and parents confirm this. The curriculum promotes learning how to keep yourself safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not always make use of assessment effectively in the foundation subjects to pick up pupils' misconceptions. Consequently, they do not consistently identify gaps in pupils' learning. Leaders should continue to support teachers in their use of assessment in order to enable them to make accurate assessments of pupils' knowledge and understanding in the foundation subjects.
- Some subject leaders are new to their roles. They have only recently started to check what happens in their subject. This means that they are not able to evaluate fully the effectiveness of their subject. Leaders should ensure that these subject leaders develop their monitoring and evaluation so that they can provide better support to teachers.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	103326
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10227372
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ninna Makrinov
Headteacher	Paula Rudd
Website	www.watermill.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 February 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make any use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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, history and English. For each deep dive, inspectors met 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.
- Inspectors met with the leader for early years and observed children within the setting.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school, including at lunchtime. Inspectors also met with groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school and personal development opportunities.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the records for the safer recruitment of staff and held a meeting with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors met with staff to check their understanding of safeguarding and the impact of any training received.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- Inspectors spoke with several members of staff, including those who have recently joined the teaching profession. They considered the responses from staff to the online inspection questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the day and considered the responses, including written responses, to Ofsted Parent View, the online questionnaire.
- The views of pupils were also considered through discussions and the Ofsted online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lynda Townsend, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Steph Withington

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