

Wickersley Northfield Primary School

Northfield Lane, Wickersley, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S66 2HL

Inspection dates

24–25 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have ensured that standards in reading, writing and mathematics have continued to rise. By the time they leave school, pupils' outcomes at the expected national standards are better than the national averages.
- Strong partnerships between school leaders, governors and the trust have created a positive learning environment where staff and pupils feel valued and want to do their very best.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are strengths. Pupils follow the excellent example set by adults in school. Pupils' understanding and demonstration of respect are very good.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good overall, though pupils are not always moved on quickly in their learning when they have grasped a concept.
- The support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well organised. These pupils make similarly good progress to others from their different starting points.
- Leaders have given clear direction to teachers in how to develop pupils' writing across school and throughout the curriculum. As a result, the vast majority of pupils write with confidence and make strong progress.
- Safeguarding is effective.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive effective additional support. They make strong progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have started to implement strategies to deepen pupils' understanding in reading. A lower proportion of pupils reach the higher standard in reading than is the case in writing and mathematics.
- Children get off to a good start in early years. The positive relationships that are such a strength of the school are quickly established. Consequently, children are happy and confident in their work.
- Work to engage pupils in an exciting new curriculum has got off to a good start. However, middle leaders, new to their roles, have not had sufficient time to have an impact in ensuring that pupils are appropriately challenged in their learning across all subjects.
- Pupils' physical well-being needs are well met. Additional sport funding is used effectively to provide a range of extra sports activities.
- The trust has led improvement in staffing and resourcing. It provides effective day-to-day support for school leaders and meets with them to hear their evaluation of the school. However, it has not, until recently, supported and challenged leaders' work in key aspects such as teaching and safeguarding.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across all subjects by:
 - making sure that pupils are promptly moved on in their learning when they have understood a concept
 - providing more challenge for pupils to make independent choices, encouraging them to select which skills to apply and test out to deepen their understanding, including in mathematics
 - continuing to action leaders' plans to improve outcomes in reading, supporting pupils in exploring and understanding texts and further developing older pupils' enjoyment and sharing of high-quality books, at home and in school.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that there is a more formal arrangement to check, evaluate and record the work of school leaders, so that they are challenged to refine their work, and governors can more successfully hold leaders to account for school improvement
 - developing the new roles of middle leaders to raise achievement in subjects across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the school became an academy, there have been considerable positive changes in teaching and learning, and the school environment. Although many leaders are relatively new to their posts, they understand their roles well and how they can contribute successfully to school improvement. Staff and governors are unanimous in their opinion that these changes have been for the better. Improvements in outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 confirm these views.
- A sense of teamwork is tangible when you enter the school building. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, governors and the trust have created an environment where adults and pupils are valued and praised for the work they do. This has resulted in pupils developing strong moral and social values. They are polite, and show great respect for each other and the adults who support them so well.
- Evaluating the quality of education in the school has been a whole-team process. Everyone has a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas it needs to improve. The improvements are identified clearly in the school development plan. The reports and documentation the headteacher provides for the governing body are detailed and informative. They link directly to leaders' thorough assessment information, detailing checks on the progress pupils are making and the standards they are achieving. Leaders accurately identify any areas of underperformance and put systems in place to address these.
- The majority of disadvantaged children have lower skills than those typical for their age when they start school. Leaders use the pupil premium funding to support pupils' early literacy skills, particularly in learning in phonics. Careful and frequent checks on the progress these pupils are making throughout school mean that their needs are clearly identified. They are given additional support where it is needed. As a result, the vast majority of disadvantaged pupils make progress that is similar to that of their peers. Leaders have identified that this progress needs to be even more rapid to ensure that more pupils reach the national age-related expectations. They have actioned plans to support this.
- Leaders have effective processes in place to identify, support and check on the achievement of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The funding for these pupils is used effectively. They make at least good progress from their very different starting points.
- Effective work has started to help pupils of all abilities to apply and refine their skills in mathematics. Leaders acknowledge that there is more work to be done. They have identified this area on the school development plan and enlisted the help of a mathematics specialist from the local authority.
- Actions taken by leaders to raise achievement in writing have had a positive impact on pupils' outcomes across the school. Leaders' direction to teachers to help pupils improve their writing is evidenced in pupils' work. Pupils know how to edit and improve their writing, using checklists and examples that are well explained by teachers.

- Leaders have identified reading as an area for improvement, to bring it in line with the stronger than national outcomes in writing and mathematics. Children get a great introduction to books and reading when they start school. Leaders aim to work with parents to raise the profile of continuing to read together and share high-quality books and information as the children progress through school. They have rightly identified that pupils do not always talk about and explore the books they read well enough to deepen their understanding. The most able pupils in particular are not fully enabled to extend their skills and understanding.
- The school was sponsored by the White Woods Primary Academy Trust in 2014, after experiencing an unsettled period in staffing, finances and standards. The chief executive officer for the trust served as the executive headteacher when the school first joined the trust. The strong partnerships he created with staff, parents and pupils have continued. The school has benefited from a stronger staffing structure, new resources, an improved environment, and helpful day-to-day advice. However, until very recently, the trust has had no formal arrangement to check on, evaluate and record the work of school leaders. As a result, school leaders have not had the challenge they need to question and refine their work to ensure that it is the very best it can be. In addition, this has meant that governors rely completely on the information about the school presented by school leaders.
- Leaders' work to deliver an 'EPIC' curriculum, with a focus on Engagement, Progression, Innovation and Communication, is clearly visible in school. Classroom and corridor displays celebrate high-quality topic work. Pupils speak eagerly about the visits and activities that have supported their learning. Pupils' learning in subjects such as art and physical education is particularly successful. Pupils are engaged and work well together, communicating their ideas effectively. However, work across subjects is varied and teachers often miss opportunities to challenge pupils' thinking and encourage their independence. Leaders have identified that the development of the new middle leadership team will help to address this area.

Governance of the school

- Governors know and understand the detailed and regular information the headteacher gives them. They formulate questions about this information to check on the impact of school leaders' work and the improvements being made. For example, they know which groups of pupils have lower attainment, the reasons for this, and what leaders are doing to make improvements. However, they do not have any other means of checking on the school's work. They have not sought additional validation from the trust, or beyond, about the success of leaders' work. Therefore, they rely on the checks school leaders make on their own work, such as the audit of safeguarding arrangements and practices, and the evaluations of leadership to inform them about how well the school is doing. This has limited how successfully governors can hold school leaders to account or support leaders in making further improvements.
- Governors are keen volunteers who are proud of the school, the achievements of the pupils and the excellent relationships that exist between adults and pupils. They have a good knowledge of the positive impact of the school's work to develop pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. They know how additional funding,

such as that to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is used effectively to help these pupils make good progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's record of recruitment checks is compliant with requirements. Key staff have undertaken training to support them in safer recruitment.
- Updated safeguarding training for staff had just been received, or was due to take place during the week of the inspection. Appropriate staff are trained in basic first aid and paediatric first aid. Staff know how to recognise signs of concern and how to report these.
- The designated safeguarding leader ensures that referrals are reported, recorded and followed up appropriately. The school makes effective links with a number of other agencies.
- Adults recognise potential risks in the environment and adjust their work and direction to pupils accordingly to ensure that everyone is safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and a clear understanding of the national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Better support and direction to pupils about how to improve their work are having a positive impact on outcomes.
- Pupils of all abilities, including the most able, make strong progress in writing. Plentiful opportunities to write, in activities across the whole curriculum and in a wide variety of styles, engage pupils and give them chance to practise their skills. Teachers encourage pupils to use checklists to guide them in how to improve their work. They use carefully chosen texts and demonstrate writing styles effectively to immerse pupils in high-quality writing. As a result, a greater proportion of pupils reach expected and higher standards in writing at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Pupils' work in mathematics shows evidence of teachers' aims to help pupils improve their use of mathematical skills. Pupils are encouraged to develop fluency in their mathematical skills so that they can successfully apply these skills when solving mathematical problems. Pupils are developing more confidence in this area, but are not always moved on quickly enough when they have grasped a concept, particularly those who are most able. Pupils are not always challenged to make independent choices about the strategies and processes they will employ.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know that supporting pupils in reaching greater depth in their reading is a school priority. They are implementing a number of strategies and routines to deepen pupils' understanding of texts, balancing this with an emphasis on enjoyment and the sharing of books.
- The teaching of phonics has improved. Routines in phonics teaching and an emphasis on accurate sounding, in tandem with correct letter formation, are well established. Pupils confidently apply their phonic skills to their reading and writing.

- Pupils say that teachers make their learning fun across the curriculum. Teachers start a new topic with an exciting event, story, visit or activity that draws the pupils in and makes them eager to find out more. This style of delivery has motivated and excited pupils. However, work across subjects currently varies in content, coverage and challenge. As well as weekly homework in basic skills, pupils have homework activities each half term that are linked to their topic. Pupils can choose how to present their work. For example, pupils' homework for their space topic included models, stories, poems, factual information and artwork.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel well cared for and listened to by adults. They explain with certainty that adults are fair and calm, and help them to resolve problems successfully. Pupils of all ages treat others with kindness and respect. They do the same with visitors to the school. They are polite, opening doors and confidently thanking others for doing the same. They offer warm smiles and engage quickly in conversation, eager to talk about their school and their friends.
- The breakfast club provides a positive start to the day. Pupils mix well with others of all ages. They take turns and involve everyone.
- Pupils speak highly of the school dinners. They say that they have several options to choose from. They are taught about how to make healthy choices. The atmosphere and behaviour in the dining hall are similar to those found in a friendly restaurant. Pupils chat calmly to each other and wait patiently for their turn to collect their food. It is a pleasant time of the day.
- The school council is proud of its role. It focuses its work on organising events to raise money for charity. Other pupils take responsibilities through roles such as those of playground buddy and eco-warrior. Pupils show interest and sustained concentration in their learning from a young age. They are very well guided and supported by adults. Leaders are keen to encourage more pupils to show initiative, to have a voice in school improvement and to show more independence in their work and learning.
- Pupils speak about some of the ways they are taught to keep safe. For example, they explain how they are taught how to keep safe if they are going out to play 'trick or treat'. They discuss some of the school's work to keep safe online. They say that some pupils have experienced bullying online, but that adults know about this and are teaching them all more about this. Leaders have plans to train some pupils to be e-safety cadets, to help to lead this important area of learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- It is very clear that pupils understand why they should behave well, rather than doing it because they are told to. Behaviour in lessons, outside on the playground and around school is excellent.
- The care and attention adults take to display pupils' work and create a stimulating and welcoming environment are mirrored in the care that pupils take of the resources in their classroom.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is consistently better than the national average. Leaders promote good attendance well. They agree that the checks on the attendance of individual pupils could be even more thorough.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Good teaching enables pupils to achieve well. The standards reached by pupils by the time they leave school have improved over the last three years. Provisional results for the end of key stage 2 for 2017 show that a higher proportion of pupils than that found generally in schools across the country reach expected standards in reading and writing and mathematics. A larger proportion of pupils than that found generally in schools across the country reach higher standards in writing and mathematics. Outcomes for pupils in reading at higher standards are not as strong. Leaders have rightly identified this on their plans for improvement.
- The standards pupils reach at the end of key stage 1 in writing and mathematics remain strong. Outcomes in reading are slightly lower than the national average, at expected and higher standards. Improved teaching and routines in phonics and teachers' clearer direction in reading are starting to have a positive impact on addressing this difference.
- A whole-school focus on helping pupils to refine their mathematical skills, and apply these to tasks, is starting to come through in pupils' work. Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 are strong.
- Provision for disadvantaged pupils helps them to make good progress across the curriculum. Leaders have rightly identified that the progress these pupils make now needs to be even more rapid, to help them catch up with other pupils nationally. Additional lessons and activities to support this have got off to a good start.
- Carefully targeted support is closely matched to the emotional, social, educational and behavioural needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This results in the vast majority of these pupils making good progress from their starting points.
- While pupils enjoy an engaging and exciting introduction to different subjects across the curriculum, teaching does not always provide enough challenge and opportunity for pupils to think independently and make strong progress across all subjects.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years classrooms provide a well-organised, welcoming and productive start to school life. Very well-modelled behaviour and expectations from adults result in

children quickly working well together, developing positive behaviour and showing an eagerness for trying new things. During the inspection, the way that children talked in a calm and friendly way to each other about their learning was particularly notable.

- Children's starting points on entry to Nursery and Reception show some variation. This year, in September 2017, most children entered the Reception class with skills that are broadly typical for their age. Thorough assessments by the early years team show an accurate picture of children's skills across the whole curriculum. Likewise, assessments of last year's Reception children are accurate. Along with the children's work, these show much lower starting points, particularly in early literacy skills. Children last year achieved a good level of development that was similar to the national average by the time they left Reception. Good teaching, and clear direction of the next steps children need to take, result in children making good progress through early years. Leaders agree that the most able children are not always fully challenged in developing their skills across all areas of the curriculum, particularly in the first part of the school year.
- The early years setting is well led and managed. The leader holds weekly meetings for the whole team, as well as having frequent informal conversations, ensuring that each adult knows each child's needs and next steps. The teachers and support staff know the children well. They use this knowledge to inform their planning and the direction they give in the areas of the indoor and outdoor learning spaces. Adults use skilful questioning to help children take the next steps in their learning.
- Very clear routines and boundaries mean that children know exactly what is expected of them, in their work and their behaviour. For example, during the inspection, a group of boys and girls wanted to practise their writing on the interactive white board. They quickly sorted themselves into an orderly line and waited patiently for their friends to finish before taking their turn.
- The early years team provides numerous opportunities for children to explore and develop their early literacy and mathematical skills. The environment is rich with letters, language and numbers. The areas of learning are well planned to give many opportunities for children to try out these skills. For example, during the inspection, children in the outdoor area were re-telling the story of Goldilocks, with books and props. Some were practising their letter formation, and others were relaxing and sharing stories in the book area. Children were using their phonic skills well in their reading and writing. One child shared his reading book, using expression for the animal sounds and talking confidently about the story.
- Staff are careful about children's safety and are alert to their needs. Children show care for each other and they behave well. They are confident, independent learners. They feel safe and have positive relationships with the adults in the setting.
- Staff value their partnerships with parents. Each morning, the Nursery and Reception classroom doors are open to children and their parents so that parents can come in, get their children settled and have the opportunity to speak to staff if they need to. Each week, parents can look at their child's work in their learning journey, encouraging discussion about what they have learned and creating opportunities for further work and celebration at home.

School details

Unique reference number	141337
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10036380

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	454
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mrs Liz Duncan
Headteacher	Miss Claire Middleton
Telephone number	01709 543704
Website	www.wickersleynorthfieldprimary.co.uk
Email address	wickersley-northfield.primary@rotherham.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Wickersley Northfield Primary School is an academy converter school. It opened on 1 November 2014. The school is part of the White Woods Primary Academy Trust, a multi-academy trust.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who require support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The school has provision for Nursery-aged children.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast club each morning.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons across a range of subjects in all classes. Many of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- During visits to lessons, inspectors spoke with pupils and looked at their work to find out more about how well they are learning.
- Two meetings were held with pupils, and inspectors talked informally with pupils around the school. Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about reading. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors met regularly with the senior leadership team, including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the acting assistant headteacher, the early years leader and the school business manager. They met with the whole staff and with members of the governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer for the trust, who was previously the executive headteacher.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including leaders' evaluation of school performance, school development planning, and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning. Inspectors also reviewed the minutes of meetings of the governing body and information relating to safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors met with parents and took into account the 70 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. They considered the nine staff responses and the 38 pupil responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Kate Rowley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christine Turner	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Bissett	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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