

Inspection of Alumwell Infant School

Primley Avenue, Walsall, West Midlands WS2 9UP

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 2024

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who attend Alumwell Infant School are happy, feel safe and enjoy their learning. Staff have strong relationships with pupils and want the best for them. The school's values of 'we learn, we grow, we achieve' are evident through the care given to pupils. Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school.

Pupils are polite, well-mannered and respectful. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to staff and focus hard to complete their work. At social times, pupils eat and play sensibly with their friends.

The school's curriculum is designed effectively so that pupils learn a wide range of subjects. Children learn to read as soon as they start in Reception and enjoy sharing stories and learning rhymes. Since the previous inspection, the school has strengthened the curriculum and prioritised reading and mathematics. Pupils are now making better progress than in the past.

Pupils have a range of additional opportunities to participate in. There are several extra-curricular activities, including choir, science club and gymnastics. Pupils can take on roles and responsibilities in school, such as school councillors and librarians. The school's 'hidden curriculum' widens pupils' experiences further. Pupils in Year 2, for instance, particularly enjoy their visit to the seaside.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious and designed with the needs of pupils in mind. It builds step by step in a logical order. In addition, teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Staff have received extensive training to help improve their subject and teaching knowledge. This has ensured that the curriculum is now taught effectively.

Many pupils arrive at this school with English as an additional language. The school prioritises oracy and gives pupils many opportunities to practise their speaking and listening. This is working well. Teachers use resources well and structure tasks effectively. However, some teachers do not check pupils' understanding throughout lessons. This means staff do not always know when pupils are stuck or need more help.

The school prioritises reading. Adults often read books to and with pupils. Pupils have frequent opportunities to read, visit the school's library and take books home to share with their parents. The new phonics curriculum starts swiftly in Reception. The school has worked closely with staff to ensure phonics is taught well. Pupils who fall behind or are new to the school are given the right support to help them catch up.

In Reception, children benefit from a high-quality and stimulating environment. Activities are chosen to give children the chance to develop their knowledge across

the full curriculum. Various activities are carefully selected to help children develop their knowledge and skills in different areas. The classroom features multi-purpose spaces, such as the 'home corner' and 'phonics role play area', to facilitate learning. Learning is well sequenced and there is a focus on reading, stories and communication. Children have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy practising new sounds and words.

The school is aspirational for all its pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school works tirelessly to know each individual pupil well. Many pupils have complex needs and are supported by specially trained staff. The school's bespoke provision, the 'rainbow room', offers a safe, personalised and stimulating environment for pupils to learn. Pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points.

The school has taken action to raise the importance of attending school. They are working closely with families to help pupils attend more regularly. This is starting to work well for some pupils. However, there are still too many pupils who are absent and persistently absent from school. This means that they miss too much of their learning.

The school's personal, social and health education curriculum is well structured. Pupils develop their understanding of how to stay healthy and safe, including how to stay safe online. The school celebrates its rich and diverse community. Pupils learn about different beliefs and cultures. There are visits to places of worship, including the local church, gurdwara and mosque. The pastoral care provided by the school is extensive and valued by pupils and parents alike.

Governors work well with school leaders and provide effective support and challenge to leaders. Staff are proud to work at the school and say that leaders prioritise their workload and well-being.

Since the previous inspection, the school has taken positive steps to improve many aspects of the school's work. There have been noticeable improvements in the teaching of reading and mathematics. However, leaders do not always have a clear overview of all aspects of their work. This means that they do not have a precise understanding of where things need to improve further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not check pupils' knowledge and understanding systematically throughout lessons. This means that some pupils' misconceptions and gaps in knowledge are not addressed as quickly as they could be. The school should

ensure that all teachers consistently check that pupils are secure in their learning and address any misconceptions and gaps in knowledge in a timely manner.

- There are still too many pupils who are absent and persistently absent from school. This means that pupils miss too much of their learning and other school experiences. The school should continue to work closely with families and continue to develop strategies to improve attendance.
- Leaders do not have a clear strategic overview of all aspects of their work. This means that they do not always have a precise understanding of where things need to improve further. Leaders should ensure that they accurately evaluate what is working well and what is not and use this information to improve the school further.

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	104143
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10294508
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Helen Canlett
Headteacher	Donna Harper
Website	www.alumwell-i.walsall.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 November 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs a morning club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school 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 physical education. 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.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum and improvement planning. The school website was also checked.
- 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 observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the local governing body, a representative from the local authority, the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils, staff and parents to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Leah Adams, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Ray	Ofsted Inspector

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