

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Wyre Forest School

Habberley Road, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY11 6FA

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 June 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

A real sense of enjoyment, purpose and positivity permeates through Wyre Forest School. Pupils benefit from a rich, ambitious and broad education. From the early years through to sixth form, the school prepares pupils well for their next steps. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can do. They believe in pupils' potential to succeed and have a detailed understanding of each pupil's needs. All of this helps pupils to achieve particularly well.

Pupils enjoy attending this school. They build trusting relationships with staff and have positive connections with their peers. Pupils behave well in class and during social times. Some pupils find it hard to manage their emotions. When this happens, knowledgeable staff support these pupils effectively and with care.

Personal development and communication are central to the curriculum, forming the foundation for daily life and learning across the school. Pupils learn to use a range of strategies to communicate their thoughts, needs and wishes. They have well-planned opportunities to understand how to stay safe and accept each other's differences.

The school works effectively with families, who appreciate the caring culture of the school.

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

The school has sustained and improved its performance effectively since the last inspection. Leaders are not complacent, and they constantly seek and make improvements in the best interests of the pupils. Work on curriculum advancements has been very effective. The school has thoughtfully sequenced the curriculum to ensure

pupils build knowledge and skills in a logical, progressive manner. Staff expertly break down the most important knowledge and skills for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They make appropriate changes to teaching, resources and activities so that pupils can access the learning from their different starting points and achieve well.

Through tailored communication approaches, staff provide clear guidance to pupils. This supports pupils' understanding and engagement. For example, in mathematics, staff use pictures and objects of reference to develop subject-specific vocabulary linked to early number, such as 'more' or 'less'. In the Reception Year, adults appropriately model early reading skills to children through reading symbols. Pupils enjoy learning the foundations of early reading, for example through listening and responding to sounds. Pupils then use more advanced communication systems to express their ideas and reading skills further. Some pupils move on to decode texts and read books that are closely matched to the sounds they already know.

From the early years, staff are adept at teaching important skills such as following routines, being aware of others and taking turns. Staff act promptly and skilfully to help pupils manage their feelings and emotions. The persistent focus on building positive behavioural habits takes time, but it leads to pupils becoming highly motivated and taking pride in their learning.

Leaders know that pupils' attendance at school is crucial to their learning. The school successfully works with a variety of agencies and parents to put in place measures to improve pupils' attendance. This work is paying off, with improved and sustained regular attendance across the school.

The school's work to support pupils' wider development is effective. Pupils take part in a wide range of experiences to enhance their understanding of the world around them. They learn about physical fitness, healthy lifestyles and relationships. A focus on careers and skills for later life runs across much of the school's work. For example, younger pupils develop their confidence and financial skills through their regular trips to the local supermarket. Sixth-form students develop life skills in a realistic environment by successfully running a coffee shop in the local community. All of this prepares them well for their next steps in education and life.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate that leaders, and those responsible for governance, consider the impact of changes on their workload and well-being. The committed governing body works strategically to provide effective challenge and support to school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in December 2019.

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	135791
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10343940
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	372
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	39
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Brenda Lines
Headteacher	Rebecca Garratt
Website	www.wfs.worcs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 December 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. These include profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, physical disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, multi-sensory impairment and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan.
- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provision on a part-time basis.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the chair of the governing body and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector spoke to a local authority representative, a school improvement advisor and a leader of the alternative provision.
- Inspectors carried out inspection activities, including discussions with leaders and teachers about the curriculum, visiting a sample of lessons, listening to pupils, speaking with groups of pupils about their learning and considering pupils' work.
- 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.
- The inspectors met with groups of pupils and staff formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them at social times and in lessons.
- A range of school documents was reviewed, including the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff.

Inspection team

Amjid Zaman, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Janet Lewis

Ofsted Inspector

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