

Short Heath Junior School

Pennine Way, Willenhall, West Midlands WV12 4DS

Inspection dates

10–11 May 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher and head of school have high expectations of both teaching and learning. They have ensured that the school has improved since the last inspection.
- Subject leaders are now influencing how their subjects are taught. This has led to curriculum improvement.
- Disadvantaged pupils, particularly those with middle and high prior attainment, are making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching has improved well since the time of the last inspection. As a result, pupils' outcomes have also improved. However, variation remains between and within year groups.
- Pupils' outcomes are better this year than previously. However, pupils with low starting points are not making sufficient progress in writing and mathematics in order to catch up with their classmates.
- The most able pupils achieve well. This is because they are given work which challenges them effectively.
- Boys make similar progress to girls. Boys' attainment is behind that of girls owing to weaker progress prior to this academic year.
- Reading has improved this year. This is owing to a comprehensive range of strategies designed to encourage pupils to enjoy their reading and to read more often.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils' attendance continues to improve. So far this year, all groups of pupils have attended well.
- Pupils are clear about how they should conduct themselves around school. As a result, their behaviour is good.
- The school has robust systems in place to keep pupils safe. Staff are vigilant and pupils look out for one another.
- The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Pupils show respect for different views by listening attentively to each other. They subsequently reflect well on their own perspectives.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, and accelerate the progress of boys and pupils with low starting points, by ensuring that all teachers check that these pupils have secured key mathematical and writing skills before moving on to other work.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders sharpen their work with teachers to iron out inconsistencies in teaching practice
 - leaders hold teachers to account for the progress of lower-attaining pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher and the head of school are passionate about the school and demonstrate a clear ambition for the pupils. This is apparent in their high expectations of both teaching and pupils' learning. As a result, pupils' attendance has risen as they enjoy coming to school and tackling the challenging work presented.
- Leaders are courageous. They are not afraid to make changes if pupils are not achieving well. For example, it was decided to change the way handwriting was taught, focusing more on pupils' posture and writing techniques. Pupils are now writing more fluently, which is enabling them to get their ideas on paper more quickly.
- The curriculum, along with extra-curricular activities, is effective as it motivates different groups of pupils in their learning well. 'Wow days' for each topic are designed to stimulate pupils to think hard and develop personal opinions. Prior to this academic year, boys were less engaged than girls. This led to poor behaviour and learning missed for some boys as they were not included in sessions. They now enjoy their topics and clubs, with one group telling inspectors that they enjoy finding out about how things work.
- Subject leaders play a pivotal role in developing the curriculum. Senior leaders encourage them to research those areas they are responsible for. Some subject leaders have gained accreditation for their development. They evaluate how well their subjects are being taught. As a result, leaders talk clearly about strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. Areas of weakness are addressed, which has led to most groups of pupils progressing well.
- All leaders are more effective now than at the time of the previous inspection. There is strong capacity for further improvement. The school invests wisely in staff training, focusing support on aspects which will improve pupils' performance. For example, the assistant headteacher has developed a wealth of reading activities, informed by relevant research and training. Morale is high as staff understand how they contribute to school improvement.
- Leaders evaluate their work effectively. There is a clear rationale for what they do. For example, they use 'deep reviews' in each year group to check out how well teaching enables pupils to learn. As a result, leaders have a clear understanding of teaching performance, knowing what they need to do to improve further.
- Leaders ensure that pupil-premium funding is used effectively. Specific barriers preventing disadvantaged pupils from learning as well as they might are understood. These are addressed using a variety of strategies. For example, younger pupils attend a nurture group which helps them develop positive attitudes towards school and learning. This has led to pupils attending school more frequently, as well as being more confident in lessons.
- Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is well supported. During the inspection, pupils were keen to talk about their learning from visits to places of worship. Their well-honed social skills are evident in lessons, as pupils are keen to both offer and listen to different perspectives. Pupils understand the school behavioural systems and

value the opportunities to put any misdemeanours right. Pupils are encouraged to look after school resources, including their equipment packs. Leaders' work has ensured that the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective.

- Pupils at Short Heath are thoughtful. They look out for each other and are proud of their own and their peers' achievements. They understand about democratic processes and that others will hold beliefs different to their own. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. There was no evidence of discrimination seen during the inspection or in school records.
- The representative from the local authority knows the school very well. During her frequent visits to school, she works with leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's practice. As a result, leaders know what the school needs to do to improve further.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding has been used well. The prime aim of improving pupils' PE skills has been achieved by employing a sports coach. The PE curriculum now contains information about the progression of skills, which helps teachers teach pupils specific skills at specified times.
- Leaders with responsibility for pupils who have complex special educational needs and/or disabilities are effective. They have ensured that these pupils receive appropriate support from the additional funding. This has enabled them to make good progress, both academically and in their personal and social development. They are not as effective in ensuring that other pupils with less complex needs are making sufficient progress.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils who need to make faster rates of progress than their classmates, in order to attain expected outcomes by the end of the year, are doing so. This is because the progress of these pupils is variable between year groups. Leaders do not make the importance of this group's progress clear when they meet with teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching.
- Teaching remains variable between and within year groups. Leaders have tackled inadequate teaching effectively. However, some teaching is not yet consistently good. As a result, the progress of lower-attaining pupils is not as strong as that of other groups.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- Governors have a good understanding of school performance. They are kept well informed by leaders and by link governors' reports. Link governors, who are assigned specific roles including safeguarding, visit the school every half term. They refer to previous visits to determine specific aspects of school work they are going to focus on. They work with the local authority representative and other external agencies, which helps to ensure that their evaluations are robust and accurate.
- Along with the executive headteacher and head of school, governors know the school community well. Their work with parents has been effective in developing a shared understanding of what pupils with positive attitudes can achieve. Governors use their

budget wisely, by funding time for staff to ensure that pupils develop confidence as learners. This has led to pupils being proud of their academic achievements.

- Governors know the current strengths and weaknesses in teaching and, in turn, pupils' outcomes. Their monitoring of how well senior leaders and teachers perform is effective. They ensure that leaders and teachers are held to account for their performance. Governors have a good understanding of how weaknesses are being addressed, often through well-chosen training.
- Governors ensure that all statutory duties, including safeguarding, are met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Newly appointed staff learn immediately about the importance of safeguarding and their role in keeping children safe. This is because senior staff talk to them about safeguarding at Short Heath, referring to specific documents, such as the safeguarding policy.
- There is a culture of vigilance. Parents, pupils and staff express positive views about how the school keeps pupils safe. Pupils look out for one another and staff supervise pupils well during the school day. Staff use the curriculum to convey key messages to pupils, such as road safety.
- Staff understand and adhere to a clear process for raising issues about pupils' welfare. The family support team and senior leaders respond in a timely manner, with agreed actions implemented appropriately. They use a range of skills and expertise to inform such actions, for example counselling skills.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers make their high expectations of what pupils need to do clear in lessons. These expectations have been embedded this year, which means that pupils are now used to listening attentively and following instructions well. Pupils know that staff want the best for pupils and, consequently, are respectful of adults.
- In each classroom, adults know which pupils are entitled to additional funding. Staff ensure that they keep a close eye on how well disadvantaged pupils are progressing in reading, writing and mathematics. Typically, staff make changes to their teaching if pupils' progress is not strong enough, for example by asking more specific questions of these pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils, especially those who came to Short Heath with average and high attainment, are making strong progress this year.
- Teachers present work which challenges most-able pupils well. Teachers know that these pupils need to maintain high levels of attainment and so provide tasks which make them think hard. Pupils relish such activities and expectation. They spoke positively about their enjoyment in lessons.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support and challenge for pupils who have complex needs. Information about specific barriers to learning is shared between classroom staff, school leaders and parents. This helps form comprehensive and well-

planned support for individual pupils. For example, teaching assistants understand the importance of developing social and emotional development for some pupils. This year, these vulnerable pupils are better prepared to take on the learning that is presented in their year groups.

- Reading is well taught across the school. Staff draw on a range of resources to encourage pupils to read a wider range of material more often this year than previously. This includes, for example, setting up after-school sessions in the school hall where families can come with blankets and snacks to enjoy reading with each other in a relaxed environment. Pupils talk about how the school has been effective in encouraging them to enjoy their reading.
- The teaching of writing has remained a strength over recent years. Teachers know specific skills that pupils need to show in their writing in different year groups. Sequences of lessons are well thought through. This enables pupils to learn and rehearse new skills across a range of subjects, for example by writing specific instructions for scientific investigations.
- Since the last inspection, teachers have secured good mathematical subject knowledge. They understand the demands of the curriculum well. This has led to pupils learning a variety of mathematical skills, including problem-solving and calculation strategies.
- Activities set for homework are designed to encourage pupils and their families to work together. A variety of creative responses to these family-learning tasks were seen in the school. These included model making. Parents and pupils express positive views about homework, with the latter also talking about how the school expects them to read more frequently outside of school.
- Teaching remains variable, especially regarding effective challenge and support for lower-ability pupils. This group includes those pupils who require support for their specific needs. Staff do not consistently check if these pupils have secured key mathematical and writing skills before moving on to other work. This means that misconceptions which restrict progress remain.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- This year, a nurture group has been set up. The purpose of this is to support those pupils who find learning and school life more difficult than their peers. It provides a safe and welcoming environment for the pupils, some of whom may be at risk of exclusion. Staff are skilled at using scenarios, such as how people behave in public places, to elicit how pupils feel and how they might better manage their own responses. The nurture group contributes well to pupils' emotional well-being.
- Pupils have to think for themselves in their lessons. Adults expect them to express and justify their opinions to their classmates. Pupils discuss their ideas readily and listen to others attentively. They collaborate well in their learning. Pupils are proud of their academic achievements.

- Pupils enjoy a wide range of physical activities at the school. This helps develop their physical well-being.
- Pupils look out for one another. There is a caring ethos around school. Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take and say that there is no bullying in school. There are no recorded incidents of bullying this year.
- Pupils develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well at Short Heath. They understand the importance of being respectful of one another as this helps them learn about different points of view.
- The school's provision for helping pupils stay safe when online is effective. Pupils understand the dangers they might face when learning and playing using computer technology. They know what to do should they become suspicious.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' attendance has improved since the last inspection. This year, overall attendance remains above the national average. The school's work to reduce persistent absence has been effective. No group of pupils is vulnerable because of weak attendance. Pupils are punctual, with any lateness having justifiable reasons.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved this year. This is owing to pupils understanding and stepping up to clear expectations of staff in and around school. This has led to a significant reduction in the number of yellow warning cards received by pupils.
- As the school worked to embed high behavioural expectations, some pupils, especially boys, found this very challenging. This led to high exclusion rates early in the autumn term. Rates have reduced markedly this term. This affirms the impact of work with those pupils who are at risk of exclusion.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and around school, including at the breakfast club, is good. Pupils feel involved in the changes regarding behavioural support in school. For example, the school has listened to pupils' views and set up more activities at lunchtime. As a result, poor behaviour in lessons and at playtimes is rare.
- Pupils understand why staff give rewards and sanctions to pupils for their behaviour. They know that they can put things right if they have chosen wrong options earlier in the day. This helps pupils take greater ownership of their decision-making, which contributes well to the improved behaviour around school. Parents, staff and pupils expressed positive views about behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Last year, Year 6 pupils left Short Heath with weaker attainment in reading than in writing and mathematics. This was because they did not make sufficient progress through the school. This year, a comprehensive package of support for reading has been put in place. As a result, pupils are making similar rates of progress to other subjects this year.

- This year, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress when compared to their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. This is most notable in Years 5 and 6, where pupils are challenged effectively with well-chosen activities. Younger pupils are being effectively supported in securing positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are making better progress this year than in previous years. Teachers make accurate judgements about how well pupils are performing and typically adapt subsequent teaching to challenge pupils well.
- A greater proportion of pupils are attaining expected standards in each year group than in previous years. This means that they are better prepared for the learning challenges in the next year groups and when they leave Short Heath for their secondary education.
- Good standards in writing and mathematics have been maintained this year. Improved progress in reading means that standards in this subject have caught up with those in writing and mathematics.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress. They typically exceed expectations in each year group. This is owing to effective challenge in lessons which make pupils think hard and explain their strategies.
- Pupils who have complex special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Their academic progress is monitored carefully by leaders, drawing on information provided by staff and parents. If teaching is not resulting in sufficient progress, changes are made and subsequently monitored. Those pupils who have less complex special educational needs make weaker progress.
- Pupils are now demonstrating secure reading, writing and mathematical skills in other subjects, such as history, science and geography, more frequently than previously. Although inconsistent practice between classes remains, variability has reduced as the year has progressed.
- Lower-attaining pupils, including those requiring support for their special educational needs, make variable progress. While they are making similar rates of progress to their classmates, this is not enough for them to make up the ground required to attain the expected standards by the end of each year.
- Boys currently have lower attainment than girls. Boys are making similar rates of progress to girls owing to their better engagement in the curriculum. However, prior to this year, they were less well engaged, which led to them making less progress than the girls. This means they need to make faster progress in order to make up for lost time.

School details

Unique reference number	104188
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10032606

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Foster
Executive headteacher	Cathy Draper
Head of school	Sarah Harris
Telephone number	01902 368 499
Website	www.short-heath.walsall.sch.uk
Email address	shortheath@shortheathfederation.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 April 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Short Heath Junior School is smaller than the average primary school. It has been part of the Short Heath Federation with Lane Head Nursery School and Rosedale Church of England Infant School since April 2006.
- The senior leadership team includes the executive headteacher, who oversees all schools in the federation, and the head of school.
- A breakfast club for pupils is provided by the governing body. It was observed as part of this inspection.

- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. A large majority are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have a first language that is not English is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- At the time of the inspection, Year 6 pupils were taking their national assessment tests.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in most classes. They visited 10 lessons, five of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, the chair of the governing body and other governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading and listened to both higher- and lower-ability pupils read.
- Inspectors examined work in pupils' books.
- The school's child protection and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documentation written to support school improvement, including minutes from meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 replies to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and spoke with parents.
- Staff expressed their views in discussion with inspectors and via an online survey.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's website.

Inspection team

Jeremy Bird, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Johanne Clifton

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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