

Inspection of Wirksworth Junior School

Wash Green, Wirksworth, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 4FD

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Wirksworth Junior School is a happy and caring place to learn in. Leaders have created a school that is highly inclusive. They have high expectations of all pupils. Leaders want pupils to be 'creative, curious and caring'. Pupils live up to these expectations. They enjoy attending school.

Pupils behave well around school and in lessons. They are polite and respectful. Adults ensure that pupils understand the behaviour policy. Pupils value the time that they can spend talking to adults if they have a worry. They know that there are adults who will support them to manage their behaviour and feelings. Leaders sort out any incidents of bullying quickly. Consideration is given to the needs of all involved. Pupils feel safe in school.

From sailing lessons to residential trips, there are many opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and build character. Pupils also enjoy taking on leadership roles in school, such as guinea pig monitors and online monitors. Pupils apply to be school councillors. They value making their own decisions about life in school.

The school values run through the curriculum. Pupils can talk about the six core values. They say that through these they learn about, for example, respect and trust.

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

Leaders are rightly proud of the curriculum that they have created. Leaders have thought carefully about what pupils at Wirksworth need to learn and in what order. Some subjects are well established. In these subjects, leaders have identified the precise knowledge that pupils will acquire. Teachers check pupils' understanding of this knowledge. In a small number of subjects, this is less well established. Leaders are continuing to develop and refine these areas of the curriculum.

Leaders place reading at the heart of the curriculum. Staff support pupils who find reading more difficult. This helps pupils to catch up quickly with their reading knowledge, including with phonics where necessary. Pupils read books that match the sounds that they have learned. This supports them to become confident, fluent readers. Pupils read often. They enjoy reading, especially to the school guinea pigs, 'Mr Nibbles' and 'Patch'.

Leaders accurately identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They work closely with other agencies to ensure that they meet the needs of these pupils. Teachers adapt the teaching of the curriculum well. Pupils with SEND access the same learning as their peers.

The pastoral support for pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils who need help with managing their emotions receive bespoke support. The school's inclusive ethos ensures that all pupils' needs are met. Some pupils access the 'magic room'. These

purposeful times with an adult develop pupils' confidence and social interaction skills.

Across the school, there are high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils and staff have respectful relationships. In lessons, pupils listen well to their teachers. During social times, pupils play happily together.

Leaders work hard to improve pupils' attendance. They work with families to try to remove barriers to pupils' being in school. Leaders know that there is more work to be done to improve some groups of pupils' attendance. Some pupils are missing out on vital learning as they do not attend school often enough.

Pupils enjoy a range of opportunities to support their wider development. They develop a broad cultural understanding through learning about different faiths. They also learn about positive relationships and the importance of respecting the views of others. In assemblies, pupils learn about the school values, which include fairness and trust.

Leaders, including governors, know the school well. They check that the decisions they make are in the best interests of pupils. Staff feel valued, and they are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the consideration leaders give to their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. They ensure that staff and governors receive up-to-date training. This helps them to identify and help pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders respond quickly to any safeguarding concerns that staff raise. They ensure that pupils and their families receive timely and appropriate support. Staff work well with other agencies when necessary.

Leaders make appropriate checks to ensure that adults are suitable to work with children.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not broken knowledge down into precise components. This makes it harder for pupils to learn new concepts. Pupils' knowledge is not as well developed as it could be in these subjects. In these subjects, teachers are not always able to check how well pupils are learning new knowledge. Leaders should identify the precise knowledge that teachers need to teach in all subjects, so that pupils learn and remember more and that teachers have a clear understanding of what knowledge pupils have secured.
- Despite leaders' best efforts so far, too many vulnerable pupils, and pupils with SEND, do not attend school often enough. This has a negative impact on their progress through the curriculum. Leaders should continue to look at different ways to improve these pupils' attendance and to build on the work they have already undertaken.

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](#)' 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	112652
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10268221
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	126
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ed Robinson (Co-Chair) Martin Counter (Co-Chair)
Headteacher	Isabel Webb
Website	www.wirksworth-junior.com
Date of previous inspection	8 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the third routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and a range of other staff. The inspectors met with representatives of the local governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed school policies, procedures and records. The inspectors met

with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke with staff, governors and pupils about the school's approach to keeping pupils safe.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, spoke with teachers and spoke with pupils about their learning. The inspectors visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The inspector met with groups of staff and pupils and considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Kirsty Norbury, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julian Scholefield

Ofsted Inspector

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