

Inspection of Chawson First School

Wych Road, Droitwich, Worcestershire WR9 8BW

Inspection dates:	26 and 27 November 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at Chawson First School. Each day they try hard to be 'independent, aspirational and articulate'. The school does all it can to ensure that pupils attend regularly and on time. Most pupils do. There are clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils know and meet these expectations. They are polite, courteous and respectful. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and at social times. Any pupil in need of help to manage their behaviour gets effective support.

The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests. These include taekwondo, dance, knitting and choir clubs. Pupils learn about road, water, railway and online safety. Pupils value opportunities to deepen their scientific, technological and mathematical knowledge at a local middle school. Visits and visitors to school help pupils to understand the curriculum better. Pupils enjoy taking on 'ministerial' responsibilities in school, such as becoming eco-ministers and behaviour ministers. This helps them to develop important leadership skills.

Pupils enjoy learning mathematics and achieve well in this subject. However, expectations of pupils' reading and writing are not high enough. As a result, many pupils do not learn to read or write as well as they should.

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

The school's curriculum is well sequenced with ambitious endpoints. Recent work to improve mathematics has had a positive impact. Teachers are provided with useful curriculum documentation to help identify what to teach and how in subjects such as history, geography and art. However, in some subjects, including reading and writing, the curriculum is not delivered well. This is because some staff do not know how to teach these subjects effectively. The important knowledge and skills that pupils need in order to write well have not been clearly identified by the school. Staff do not consistently check on how well pupils are learning the curriculum. Spelling, grammar and punctuation errors go unchecked. Expectations of pupils' written work, including handwriting, are not high enough. All this has an impact on how well pupils achieve across the curriculum.

The school's expectations for pupils' reading are not high enough. The teaching of reading, including phonics, is variable. This is because some staff do not have the knowledge and skills they need to teach reading well. At times, pupils who find learning to read difficult are not supported effectively to catch up quickly enough, particularly some disadvantaged pupils. The school's checks on how well pupils learn to read lack oversight and rigour. This means some pupils fall further behind. Pupils do not learn to read with confidence and accuracy as well as they should.

Pupils' needs, including any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are clearly identified. However, some pupils struggle to access their work because it is too hard. Staff's knowledge of how to adjust learning for pupils with SEND is inconsistent. This means that, at times, pupils with SEND do not always get the support they need to be successful in school.

Staff work effectively with parents and carers of nursery children to establish what the children know and can do. Children in the nursery are well supported and get off to a strong start. They learn to take turns and share. Children enjoy counting and singing songs and rhymes. Adults skilfully help children to develop an awareness of sounds and learn new words. However, this work slows in the Reception Year because some staff do not have the expertise to teach early reading and writing well. In addition, there are delays in sourcing external support for those children who need it. These children do not get timely support to catch up in their language and communication skills. All this has an impact on the progress children make, particularly in reading and writing, as they move through the school.

Pupils develop an understanding of what it means to be respectful when learning about different faiths, including Christianity, Islam and Judaism. They learn about a range of cultures and festivals, such as Diwali and Christmas, and their importance to different faiths. Pupils learn about healthy and safe relationships. They know the qualities of a good friend. Pupils know how to keep safe when working online. The school's elections create great excitement. Newly elected ministers take on their roles with pride. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Turbulence in staffing, including leadership, has hampered the school's progress in recent years. School leaders, including governors, have not been well supported to set the right priorities for the school. As a result, reading and writing have not been sufficiently prioritised. The school's additional funding has not been used effectively to provide timely high-quality teaching for those pupils who need it.

Most staff are positive about the support from leaders to manage their workload and well-being. The majority of parents are positive about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The teaching of writing, including transcription, grammar, punctuation and spelling, is not consistently effective. This means that some pupils do not write legibly and accurately. The school should ensure that staff know how to teach writing well so that they can support pupils to write with fluency and accuracy and to improve their written work.
- There is inconsistency in the delivery of the school's approach to early reading and phonics. This means that some pupils, particularly pupils with SEND or those who are disadvantaged, do not learn the early reading and phonics skills needed for future success well enough. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills

they need to teach early reading effectively so that pupils learn to read as well as they should.

- Some pupils with SEND do not get the support they need quickly enough. This is because staff are not always clear how to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of these pupils. In addition, some specialist support is not sourced quickly enough to help children to catch up in the early years. The school should ensure that pupils with SEND receive the timely support they need to be successful in school.
- Governors do not have the expertise to hold leaders to account for the performance of the school. They have been too accepting of the information they receive and have not ensured that the right priorities have been set for the school. As a result, too many pupils do not learn to read or write with fluency and accuracy, including some pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. The school should ensure that governors can undertake their role effectively.

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	116672
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10343813
Type of school	First
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	356
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nick Sanders
Headteacher	Nicola Peck
Website	www.chawson.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher is new to role since the last inspection. She was the previous deputy headteacher at the school and took on the headship role in 2019.
- The chair of governors is also new to role since the last inspection.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders. The lead inspector met with members of the school's governing body. She also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority and the unregistered alternative provider. The inspectors also talked to pupils, staff and parents to gather information about school life.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history, mathematics and science. 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.
- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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 observed informal times of the day as part of their evaluation of safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Ogden	Ofsted Inspector
Ed Masterson	Ofsted Inspector

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