

Inspection of a good school: Walkwood Church of England Middle School

Feckenham Road, Headless Cross, Redditch, Worcestershire B97 5AQ

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

Outcome

Walkwood Church of England Middle School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's ethos and values are central to every aspect of school life at Walkwood Church of England Middle School. Relationships between pupils and teachers are strong. Pupils enjoy their learning. They say that their teachers care about them and help them to do their best. Classrooms are mostly calm places that encourage learning. Pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils feel safe at school. They are taught how to keep themselves safe online and in the community. They are confident that if they have a problem there will be someone to talk to, and they will always receive help. The organisation of tutor groups helps pupils to make friendships with pupils across the school. Because of this, pupils say they build strong relationships with their peers, and there is very little bullying. When it does happen, staff deal with it quickly and effectively.

Leaders have introduced a wide range of clubs and enrichment opportunities. Many pupils take part in these. For example, pupils compete in sporting events and inter-college competitions. There are also opportunities for pupils to develop their character and leadership skills. Many pupils, for instance, represent their college in the pupil parliament or hold leadership roles.

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

Leaders have created a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. Leaders want all pupils to 'love to learn, learn to live and live to love'. Leaders use these values as the basis for curriculum design. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, follow a broad and balanced range of subjects. Subject leaders work closely with local first and high schools to ensure that pupils cover the full national curriculum across key stages 2 and 3.

Subject leaders have thought carefully about what pupils should know, do and understand in each subject. They have sequenced the curriculum to make sure that new knowledge builds on prior learning.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and know the needs of their pupils well. They create purposeful learning environments for pupils. Teachers also use a range of routines to help pupils learn. For example, 'superhero' skills are a regular feature of lessons and help to build effective learning habits.

Subject leaders have developed learning journals that help teachers check that pupils have learned and remembered what they have been taught. This allows teachers to identify when pupils have missed any aspects of their learning. When this happens, most teachers help pupils to catch up or to understand difficult ideas in a different way. However, sometimes teachers do not use the assessment information they have to adapt what they teach next. This holds some pupils back.

Reading is a priority for leaders. They have ensured that it is a feature in all subjects. As a result, pupils read widely and often. Leaders have identified those pupils who are at an early stage of reading and those who have fallen behind. There are a range of programmes that help these pupils improve their reading fluency and comprehension.

Pupils who have SEND receive effective support. This is because leaders have established effective systems to identify their needs and to provide appropriate support. They ensure that pupils with SEND access the full curriculum.

Leaders support pupils' personal development. They dedicate a significant amount of time to pupils' spiritual and social education. This covers all aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. It is connected to the school's ethos and its values, the 'fruits of faith'. Through this, pupils develop their confidence and understanding of the wider world. Careers education is strong and goes beyond national guidance.

Staff say that leaders and those responsible for governance take their well-being seriously. They appreciate the care they receive and the way leaders consider their workload. Staff are proud to work at the school and the role they play in pupils' development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils well and are quick to identify when anyone might be at risk of harm. Leaders respond quickly to these concerns and take appropriate action. Staff work closely with families to provide support. They call upon an extensive range of external agencies to provide additional support when it is needed.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They know what to do if they have a concern. They trust the staff to give them the support they need.

The correct checks on adults in school are carried out and recorded.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, some teachers give pupils work that does not enable them to achieve the aims of the curriculum as well as it might. This hinders progress. Leaders should ensure that all teachers carefully plan their lessons and give work to pupils that supports their progress through the curriculum.
- Teachers' use of assessment information could be better. Some teachers do not always use the information they have about what pupils have learned to adapt what they teach next. As a result, misconceptions or gaps in pupils' learning persist. This holds some pupils back. Leaders should ensure that all teachers use assessment information effectively to adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 in February 2018.

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	139185
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10269046
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	647
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jo Power
Principal	Rev Clive Leach
Website	www.walkwoodms.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a single academy trust and is part of the Diocese of Worcester. Its most recent section 48 inspection under the Education Act 2005 for schools of a religious character was carried out in March 2017.
- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils at three unregistered providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships

Information about this inspection

- This was the first 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.
- Inspectors met with the principal, senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector held a meeting with the school's diocesan school improvement partner, two members of the governing body and the school improvement lead of The Spire Church of

England Learning Trust.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, including reading, mathematics and music. These included discussions with subject leaders and teachers, visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work. Inspectors also met with pupils to discuss their learning in these subjects. Inspectors also reviewed the support provided for pupils at an early stage of reading.
- The lead inspector reviewed the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum and spoke with the subject leader.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including leaders' plans to improve the school and their self-evaluation of the school's work. Records of local governing body meetings were also reviewed.
- When inspecting safeguarding, inspectors considered the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe, the checks made to ensure safer recruitment and the quality of staff training.

Inspection team

Lois Kelly, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Huw Bishop

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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