

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Damson Wood Nursery and Infant School

Stockwell Rise, Solihull, West Midlands B92 9LX

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 January 2025

Outcome

Damson Wood Nursery and Infant School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Sian Stevens. The school is part of the Central Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Graeme Burgess, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sarah-Jane Miller.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and excited to learn in this inclusive school. Pupils celebrate the school values of SPARKS: being safe, proud, ambitious, ready, kind and successful. In all aspects of school, pupils reflect on the values they demonstrate. Weekly Bright Sparks receive awards in celebration assemblies, and each half term, Super Sparks are awarded to pupils.

The school provides high levels of care. Children quickly settle into school life. Children are taught how to behave and consider the feelings of others. Staff are consistent in their expectations of behaviour. As a result, pupils learn to play together and feel safe and secure. They speak confidently about trusted people to go to if they are worried about something. Pupils are polite and show respect for one another.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), consistently benefit from the school's rich offer of extra-curricular clubs. Children from Reception Year onwards take on meaningful responsibilities, including the school council and anti-bullying ambassadors. Pupils are reflective, active citizens at Damson Wood, and they care about their school and community.

Pupils achieve well across the breadth of the curriculum. The school is ambitious for all pupils.

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

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum from Reception to Year 2. New learning is taught logically, and staff deliver this coherently. As a result, pupils achieve well across the curriculum. In early years, staff are highly successful in developing children's oracy skills. Staff support children in taking turns in a conversation and trying out new vocabulary to explain their ideas. For example, in Woodies, the youngest children talk back and forth with adults when blowing bubbles. The language comes tumbling out as they share new learning.

The school promotes a love of reading. Phonics is taught with fidelity to the school's programme. Staff receive regular updates and training on the phonics programme. The books that pupils read are well matched to the sounds they know. Staff quickly identify any gaps in learning and additional support is in place to support the pupils. Reading areas around the school are inviting. Pupils read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books across the curriculum.

Staff are trained in identifying and supporting pupils with SEND. They make adaptations to allow pupils to learn. Pupils develop independence skills. They show resilience and confidence in their learning alongside their peers. The support for SEND learners is highly effective.

The school has designed an extensive arts and music curriculum. Pupils learn about different artists, confidently explain what they enjoy about a piece of art or music and develop a wide body of knowledge and skills. Pupils are proud of the wide range of their art displayed throughout the school.

In developing the early years curriculum, the school has planned for progression from Reception to Year 1. However, some parts of the early years curriculum are not designed sequentially from when two-year-olds join Woodies. This means that sometimes, children do not encounter new knowledge coherently from Woodies to the end of Year 2.

The opportunities for personal development are well planned. The school's core values underpin the curriculum. Across the school, children learn to work as a team, share ideas, solve problems together and find solutions. Respect, difference and diversity are taught from the start in school.

Memorable moments are created throughout the school. There is an impressive range of clubs and experiences on offer, including trips and sporting and arts events. In addition to this, the school has mapped out fundraising events for pupils to think about the local and wider community. For example, funds were raised for an air ambulance at Christmas.

The school works closely with parents and carers to set high expectations for pupil attendance. Early, effective action is taken to support any pupil whose attendance becomes a concern. Parents get involved in school life through workshops, celebrations, assemblies and fundraising.

Staff are positive about the actions of leaders to support their workload and well-being. Staff speak positively about the work with the other school in the trust, such as the continuing professional development opportunities and collaborations between the two schools. The trust has good oversight of the school and provides a good level of challenge and support. This helps the school provide high-quality education for all.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum, the sequencing of knowledge and vocabulary is not as effective as it could be in ensuring progression for children from when they join the school at two-years-old. At times, this hinders children from building future learning. The school should develop the curriculum so that there is a clear progression from the start of school at two-years-old to the end of Year 2.

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 to be 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 July 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	143051
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10344087
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah-Jane Miller
CEO of the trust	Graeme Burgess
Headteacher	Sian Stevens
Website	www.damson-wood.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There is a new headteacher who joined in September 2024.
- The school offers a before- and after-school club.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.
- The school offers nursery provision for two-year-old children and older.
- The school is part of the Central Schools Trust. There are two schools in the trust.

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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, senior staff and other staff. The inspector spoke with the chair of the trustees, the chair of the local governing board and the CEO.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, around school and at social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector took account of the views of parents and carers using the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector also considered the opinions expressed in online pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Pamela Matty, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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