

# Inspection of Witton Middle School

Old Coach Road, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire WR9 8BD

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Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

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| <b>Overall effectiveness</b> | <b>Good</b>  |
| The quality of education     | <b>Good</b>  |
| Behaviour and attitudes      | <b>Good</b>  |
| Personal development         | <b>Good</b>  |
| Leadership and management    | <b>Good</b>  |
| Previous inspection grade    | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

The headteacher of the school is Suzie Bourne. The school is part of The Spire Church of England Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Geraint Roberts, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Rosemary Shorter.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders have worked effectively to transform the provision at Witton Middle School. The school has high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Parents wholeheartedly agree. Pupils believe that belonging, collaboration, curiosity and growth enable them to develop both as learners and as individuals. They are happy and enjoy school.

Pupils behave well during lessons, when moving around the school and at breaktimes. They have a clear understanding of the school rules of 'be ready, be responsible, be respectful, be safe'. They aspire to earn merit points and the rewards they receive for achieving them. If bullying happens, pupils know that adults will deal with it quickly.

Pupils enjoy a wide number of clubs. These go beyond the sporting and include choir, yoga and cookery. The school ensures that all pupils can take part in them, no matter what their background.

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

Leaders have worked extensively to transform the quality of education at the school. The curriculum is now more ambitious for all pupils, and leaders have carefully considered the order in which pupils should learn new knowledge. This means that, for the majority, pupils successfully learn the curriculum and their achievements have improved significantly. However, on a small number of occasions, pupils learn less effectively when their understanding is checked with less accuracy. When this happens, the learning activities pupils are provided with are not as well-matched to what they are learning. Pupils with SEND have their needs identified and met well. Leaders have effectively ensured that the provision for these pupils is of a high quality, which means they make good progress.

Pupils who need extra support in reading have targeted practice, including phonics teaching. As a result, these pupils are successfully developing fluency in reading. However, sometimes the teaching of phonics is not always focused as closely as it could be on practising and revising the sounds being taught. This means that the progress made by a small number of pupils is not as rapid as it might otherwise be. The school encourages reading through dedicated timetabled lessons. When these are delivered well, they effectively develop pupils' comprehension skills and vocabulary.

This is a warm and welcoming school community. Leaders have successfully ensured that pupils follow their core values in all interactions. Pupils understand and follow the clear routines that leaders have set out for them. They also contribute respectfully to whole-class discussions and listen attentively to other pupils' contributions. If there are any concerns, pupils have every confidence that adults will resolve them quickly.

Pupils are taught about relationships, health and the wider world in an age-appropriate way. Leaders have developed a detailed curriculum that aims to help pupils learn about different cultures and beliefs and the importance of tolerance of others' perspectives. Pupils have many opportunities to engage in leadership roles. During the inspection pupils were voting for their school council representatives, and this was tied in with teaching about the British value of democracy. Other roles available include anti-bullying ambassadors, playground leaders, reading champions, librarians, and music and sports leaders. Pupils value these opportunities to learn about taking responsibility. The school organises careers fairs in Years 5 and 7, where pupils learn about opportunities for the future.

Leaders have worked extensively and methodically to transform the provision at Witton Middle School. Expert staff from within the trust have been brought in to support and develop leaders. Staff appreciate this and are very supportive of the improvements in place. They also report that leaders consider their workload and engage with them effectively. Parents are highly supportive of the improvements that have been made. They appreciate the thoughtful and regular communication between the school and home. Governors and trustees are clear on their responsibilities and have been guided by the trust to hold leaders to account in a supportive way.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school has not ensured that phonics teaching is taught consistently to a high quality. This slows some pupils' progress in being able to read fluently. The school should ensure that staff receive training and support to teach phonics effectively so that all pupils become confident and fluent readers.
- On occasion, teachers do not check accurately what pupils understand. This means they do not always provide pupils with learning activities that are well-matched to their needs. Leaders should ensure that all teachers are skilled in checking pupils' understanding to enable them to select the most appropriate learning activity for them.

## **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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 148329   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Worcestershire   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10290680   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Middle deemed primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy sponsor-led  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 9 to 12  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 398  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Rosemary Shorter   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Suzie Bourne   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.witton.worcs.sch.uk">www.witton.worcs.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | Not previously inspected   |

## Information about this school

- The school joined The Spire Church of England Learning Trust in December 2020.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

## Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

- As a part of this inspection, inspectors met with trustees, the chair of governors, the trust chief executive officer (CEO) and deputy CEO, trust personnel, senior leaders, subject leaders and teaching staff, as well as other employees in the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in: English, mathematics, science, music and modern languages. 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. Inspectors also visited lessons in some other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's extra-curricular activities, the enrichment programme and their careers and personal development programmes with leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's behaviour and attendance records with school leaders.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, at various points in the inspection. They took account of responses to a staff survey, a pupil survey and Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

|                               |                         |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Andrew Madden, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Graeme Rudland                | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Barry Yardsley                | His Majesty's Inspector |

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