

Inspection of a good school: Astley CofE Primary School

School Lane, Astley, Stourport-on-Severn, Worcestershire DY13 0RH

Inspection dates:

4 May 2022

Outcome

Astley CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff and pupils are kind to one another at this school. Bullying hardly ever happens. In fact, behaviour in class and around the school is calm, friendly and respectful. When pupils go out and about on school trips, people often compliment them on how well they behave. Pupils are confident that staff would not allow any poor behaviour to spoil school life.

Teachers have high expectations and give pupils lots of encouragement. Pupils respond very well to this, and it makes them feel safe and secure at school. Staff organise plenty of interesting things to do and everyone can take part in all that happens. Consequently, pupils grow in confidence during their time at Astley Primary. They learn to work hard, to persevere and to value learning. Pupils are happy at school.

Early reading is taught well, and pupils enjoy plenty of stories. Most pupils also do well in mathematics. However, the school's curriculum in a few other subjects is not up to date.

Pupils regularly share their ideas about how to improve the school and help others. Adults listen to what they say and make changes in response.

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

Astley Primary is a community-minded school. Parents, pupils and staff value this. Many describe it as a welcoming, nurturing place where pupils thrive. Inspection evidence supports these views. This is a school where pupils are well cared for and known as individuals. Staff listen to what pupils have to say and pay attention to any worries they might have. Pupils also have a voice in making decisions about how the school community can help others. Their ideas about charity work and fundraising for new books, for example, have been put into action and brought change for the better.

Reading is taught well. The new nursery provides plenty of language-rich activities that pave the way for more formal learning later. Once in Reception, children follow a structured systematic approach to reading. This gives them the knowledge they need to decode words. The school provides plenty of books as children's vocabulary and fluency increase. In all classes, pupils read every day. Much of this is worthwhile and productive, and pupils enjoy it. However, the school's current approach to reading comprehension work for older pupils is not working as well as it could. At times, activities limit rather than extend pupils' reading across different subjects. In addition, some pupils get bored and lose interest when lots of lessons focus on just one book for a long period of time.

Staff follow detailed plans and make sure that the curriculum covers a lot of ground in mathematics and computing. Occasionally, teachers move learning on before pupils are ready, but the curriculum is effective most of the time.

Staff also follow detailed guidance in several other subjects. In French and music, for instance, they have adopted schemes that guide them in what to teach and when. This ensures that the right things are taught and that pupils build up knowledge in a logical progression.

In other subjects, such as history, staff plan many interesting lessons. Pupils make visits to places of interest, and can talk about what they have seen, heard and learned. However, staff are unsure about how pupils make progress over time. Pupils study lots of different things, but curriculum planning does not identify the essential knowledge that pupils should remember in order to prepare them for future learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are included in all the school does. Extra support happens in class, and leaders seek specialist advice when necessary. This works well.

A lot goes on outside the classroom. Outdoor learning is a regular feature and, from an early age, children get stuck into forest school work. In addition, the school has established links with sports clubs, and staff take pupils to activity centres. Recently, the school gained a place on a waterways learning project. All these extra events add excitement to the school day and challenge pupils to try new things.

Parents are regular visitors to assemblies and say how much they appreciate the values that the school promotes. Even so, a few parents say that they would like better communication from the school about their children's progress.

The new headteacher brings calm, measured leadership and is keen to build further on the school's many existing strengths. Staff say that they enjoy their jobs and feel supported by leaders. In turn, governors and leaders promote productive teamwork and are mindful of everyone's well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors have identified local risks. They ensure that staff teach pupils how to look after themselves and stay safe. Consequently, pupils know how to behave in different situations and understand the importance of respecting themselves and others.

Staff know how to respond to any concerns about children and adults. They write down the right things and tell the right people.

Staff deal with any incidents and accidents promptly. Leaders keep accurate records and examine these regularly to check for any patterns.

All the correct checks on adults in school are carried out and recorded correctly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's approach to reading comprehension for fluent readers is not working as well as it could. Currently, some activities occupy pupils but do not help them to increase and broaden their knowledge of language and literature as well as they might. Leaders should review their approach to reading comprehension and increase and improve opportunities for pupils to read across the curriculum. They should do this to ensure that fluent readers have more opportunities to read widely and purposefully in different subjects, and for enjoyment.
- Several factors, including the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, have limited some aspects of staff training, in particular curriculum training in foundation subjects. Because of this, staff are not as well informed about curriculum progression and current thinking in several subjects. This is reflected in curriculum plans. Leaders should plan for staff to update their knowledge so they can improve curriculum design.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in 2012.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	116864
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10226945
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Marc Stevenson
Headteacher	Tracie Langfield
Website	www.astley.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Astley School is a Church of England voluntary aided primary school. Its most recent diocesan inspection carried out under section 48 took place in July 2017. That inspection judged the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school to be outstanding.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Since April 2022, the school has operated a Nursery class.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and computing. In these subjects, the inspectors visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, discussed the curriculum and talked with staff and pupils about the way the subjects were planned and taught. Inspectors also considered some other subjects in less detail.

- Inspectors looked at school documents. These included information about leadership, behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum and improvement planning. They also checked the school's website.
- Inspectors asked pupils, staff, leaders and governors about safeguarding arrangements. The lead inspector examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records. Inspectors found out about safety procedures and routines at the school.
- Inspectors watched pupils' behaviour in class, in assembly, at lunchtime, in the playground and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, inspectors held formal meetings with the headteacher, governors, staff and a local authority adviser.
- Inspectors talked informally with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. In addition, they took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff's, pupils' and parents' views

Inspection team

Diane Pye, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mark Hinton

Ofsted Inspector

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