

Inspection of William Murdoch Primary School

Antrobus Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, West Midlands B21 9NT

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 June 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

William Murdoch Primary School is a vibrant, welcoming school. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils and encourage them to 'be their best'. Classrooms are industrious places where pupils engage well in their learning.

Pupils are happy and safe. They enjoy coming to school. Pupils are respectful and kind to each other. Bullying incidents are rare. Pupils are confident that staff will resolve any bullying issues or other concerns that they have.

Leaders ensure that pupils achieve well academically and personally. They are proud of their United Nations Convention on children's rights (UNICEF) bronze award. Pupils enjoy reading the wide range of literature available to them. A wealth of clubs, activities and experiences allow pupils to develop their talents and interests. Pupils enjoy attending cultural evenings in school, and musical events at Birmingham Symphony Hall. All older pupils learn to play a musical instrument. They enjoy attending the cricket, and the brass music club.

Leaders expect all pupils to behave well. Pupils know that it is 'good to be green'. At social times, pupils play well together, and incidents of poor behaviour are rare. The vast majority of parents are positive about the school and the education their children receive.

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

Leaders have carefully sequenced an ambitious curriculum for pupils in most subjects. They make sure that teachers have the training they need to teach well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Careful planning by teachers, based on what pupils know and understand, helps pupils to rise to the challenge and meet these expectations. Regular checks on pupils' learning during lessons and recall of previous learning help pupils to learn and remember more over time. A few subjects are not as well developed as leaders would have liked and need further work, and middle leaders do not yet fully understand their roles in checking how well children are doing in some subjects. Leaders are aware and have clear plans to accelerate this work.

Right from the start, leaders prioritise reading. All staff are well trained and receive regular updates. As a result, phonics is extremely well taught. Leaders have ensured that teachers have the right resources to teach reading well. They have invested in a wide range of books to make sure pupils have a broad reading experience. Reading books closely match the sounds pupils are learning. There are regular opportunities for pupils to read at school.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Recent improvements to leadership have further enhanced this work. Pupils get the right help and the support they need to learn alongside their peers.

The youngest children settle well to school life. This is because staff build effective relations with parents from the outset. Children are happy and confident. They have positive relationships with each other and with adults. Children enjoy the range of carefully structured learning opportunities on offer. For example, they join in with stories, songs and rhymes, and counting objects during practical activities. Children are proud of their environment and 'busily' tidy up at the end of lessons.

Personal development is a strength of the school. Leaders have ensured a rich and varied wider curriculum offer for pupils. Pupils are respectful of each other. They live the 'REACH' values and everyone is included. Pupils learn about global faiths and cultures. There is excitement about Eid celebrations this year following the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong through the school rules. They know how to make safe choices. Pupils develop to be active citizens. For example, they learn to care for their local environment through litter picking and the 'green influencer project'. Younger pupils enjoy a ride around the local area on the 'big green bus'. Pupils learn to care for their mental health by talking about concerns and 'not bottling up worries'. They know about the importance of healthy eating. Through the children's parliament, pupils develop an understanding of democracy. Children talk about respect and everyone is welcomed at school. In all, pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted significantly on this school community. It has particularly hampered the work of governors. As a result, some important areas of the school's work have not been checked, including some aspects of health and safety. Consequently, a few routines have slipped. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support from leaders to manage their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff understand their role in keeping children safe. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. They record and report concerns such as physical abuse and neglect swiftly. Leaders work well with external agencies to secure help for those pupils who need it.

Pupils learn about online safety and healthy relationships. They know how to raise concerns with trusted adults in school.

Leaders ensure the necessary safeguarding checks are undertaken before staff are employed, but do not always systematically record all administrative checks on the school's system.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in science and music is not yet clearly sequenced to build pupils' knowledge. Staff do not have the expertise they need to teach these subjects effectively. As a result, pupils do not know and remember as much as they should. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is sequenced to help pupils know and remember more. They should ensure that staff have the knowledge they need to teach these subjects effectively.
- Middle leaders do not fully understand their roles in making effective checks on the impact of the curriculum in the subjects that they lead. This means that leaders do not know how effective the curriculum is in making sure that pupils know and remember the intended curriculum. Leaders should support middle leaders to fully understand their roles and what is expected of them.
- Governance has been significantly hampered due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some important areas of the school's work have not been checked and some routines have slipped. Governors need to swiftly reinstate their regular checks on the work of the school, particularly health and safety.

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	103317
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10213021
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	679
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dev Raj Chopra
Headteacher	Mangal Singh
Website	www.williammurdoch.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 May 2015

Information about this school

- William Murdoch Primary School was previously Wilkes Green Junior School. Wilkes Green Infant School closed in 2018 and merged with the junior school to become William Murdoch Primary School.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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 carried out deep dives in art, geography, mathematics, reading and science. These included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, examining curriculum guidance and talking with pupils and staff. They also looked at work from a sample of other subjects.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and reviewed reading resources.

- The lead inspector looked at a range of documentation on the school’s website.
- Inspectors reviewed the school’s safeguarding arrangements. This included examining the record of employment checks on school staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher of lower school, the deputy headteacher of upper school, subject leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the designated safeguarding lead, the early years leader, representatives of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, the pupil survey and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Quinn	Ofsted Inspector
John Bates	Ofsted Inspector

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