* The curriculum is well organised and identifies the information that pupils need to know. For example, in science, leaders ensure that pupils build their knowledge from Nursery to Year 2. Children watch how cress grows in Nursery. In Reception, children then grow their own plants from seed. Older pupils learn to name the function of each part of a plant. However, until very recently, leaders have not checked that teachers are delivering the curriculum as intended. As a result, pupils are not learning as much as they should.
* Children are happy and behave well in early years. They enjoy their learning. However, staff are not always clear about what children should be learning, and some activities lack a clear focus. For example, staff give Reception pupils play dough for a mathematics activity but do not guide the children about what to do with it. This results in children making things such as pretend bowls of porridge rather than developing their understanding of number.
* Reading is a priority. Classrooms have reading corners, and pupils read regularly. They enjoy listening to teachers reading to them. Teachers use assessment well in reading. This ensures that pupils are reading books that match the sounds they know. There is some inconsistency in the teaching of phonics. Some adults are not pronouncing sounds accurately. This means that some pupils do not learn the correct sounds. As a result, some pupils with gaps in their learning are not catching up as quickly as they should.
* Pupils love to read. There is a structured approach to reading across the school. Pupils read regularly at home and in school. They also enjoy story time at the end of each day. Daily phonics sessions help children in early years to learn their sounds quickly. Staff give additional help to pupils who struggle to read.
* Some subject leaders do not have the expertise needed to carry out their roles and responsibilities fully. They do not yet know how well their curriculum is supporting pupils’ learning. Senior leaders should ensure that all subject leaders receive the necessary support and development they need to lead their subject area and monitor impact effectively.
* Curriculum end-points are not clear in some subjects. This means that it is not as clear to staff what pupils must know by the time they finish the topic, so some pupils do not make the progress that they could. Leaders should ensure that end-points are clearly understood and that learning takes place with these end-points in mind.
* Pupils work well together. Children from the age of two take part in many aspects of the school’s life. Older pupils care about these younger ones and treat them with kindness.
* Leaders have designed an ambitious programme of study to meet the needs of all pupils. Curriculum leaders have set out the knowledge, vocabulary and skills they expect pupils to know and remember each year. Pupils learn this information in a logical order that builds from Nursery Year onwards
* Leaders place reading at the heart of the school’s work. The approach for teaching children how to read is well organised and successful. Younger children start to hear and repeat songs, rhymes and stories as soon as they join the school. This means that they are ready to learn in more formal phonics sessions from the very start of Reception Year. Staff foster a joy of reading by promoting a broad range of books and authors. Pupils are enthused to take these books home to read. All pupils become better readers by the time they leave the school as a result of these approaches. This means that that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
* Curriculum leaders have expertise and strong subject knowledge in the subjects that they lead. However, some staff are still developing their understanding of how to teach the school’s curriculum well. Sometimes, they do not allow enough time in lessons for pupils to practise using the new information they have learned. This makes it harder for pupils to remember the essential knowledge they need.
* Pupils, including very young children in the school’s pre-school provision, behave well. They listen carefully in lessons and work hard to complete tasks. This helps everyone to concentrate on what they need to learn. Occasionally, some pupils do lose focus. Adults provide kindly reminders and pupils quickly re-engage in lesson activities.
* In Nursery, pupils get off to a good start. They learn to listen to their teachers and follow routines. They enjoy using the outdoor area. For example, they follow recipes to mix potions in the mud kitchen. Leaders plan engaging activities to help children hear sounds in words. This gets them ready to start learning phonics.
* Phonics teaching starts as soon as children begin in Reception Year. Leaders ensure that pupils practise the sounds they are learning in the books they take home. They have also ensured that the library area is an inviting space for all pupils to enjoy. However, current teaching in phonics is not consistent. Some teachers do not have strong enough subject knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not learn to read as fluently as they could. Leaders have plans to adopt a new phonics scheme, but this is not yet in place.
* In some parts of the curriculum, leaders have ensured that teachers have the resources and subject knowledge they need. This includes mathematics and music. This is not yet the case across the curriculum. In mathematics and music, lessons are well sequenced to enable pupils to learn key concepts. Teachers break content down into appropriate, small steps. They choose resources which help pupils to understand what they are learning. In some other subjects, leaders have not identified the important content that pupils need to learn. Lessons are not organised so that pupils have the opportunity to practise the skills and knowledge they need as they work towards end-points
* Leaders and staff are passionate about ensuring that every pupil leaves their school ‘life ready’. There is a sharp focus on pupils’ personal development. For example, children in Nursery are well prepared for swimming lessons before they start them.
* From the beginning of Nursery, children learn routines and teachers’ expectations. They listen carefully, follow instructions and play collaboratively together. In Reception, children use their independence skills to photograph their own work. They upload the images to an online platform for their teachers to see. They practise their mathematics, for example by learning ‘what is four and what is not four’. This learning is supported by skilful adult questioning and, where needed, adaptation.
* In early years, children listen to sounds in the environment. They begin to learn that letters represent sounds. This prepares them to begin learning to read. Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics scheme. They have ensured that all staff are trained to deliver it. However, the scheme is not yet embedded. As a result, there are some inconsistencies in the way in which some pupils are being taught to read. Pupils learning to read are regularly assessed. Leaders identify those who are falling behind. However, they do not focus precisely enough on how these pupils are supported to catch up.
* In a wide range of subjects, leaders have considered what pupils will learn and the order in which they will learn it. A child’s learning journey is mapped out from Nursery to the end of Year 6. What pupils learn builds on what they already know and builds towards what they will learn next. In the early years and beyond, the importance of developing pupils’ language is a whole-school priority. In a small number of subjects, the curriculum is very new and in the early stages of being introduced. In these subjects, leaders have not had the opportunity to check how well the curriculum is being delivered.
* Leaders have designed an ambitious, broad and rich curriculum. It provides all pupils with the knowledge they need, enabling them to achieve highly. Staff are clear about what they want pupils to learn. Every subject is taught securely and consistently well across the school, starting in the early years. Staff undertake a range of ongoing professional development. As a result, they demonstrate strong subject knowledge and use it expertly to teach pupils. Leaders set high expectations for all pupils. These expectations start in the Nursery/Reception class. In reading, for example, pupils learn all their letter sounds before finishing the Reception year. Even the lowest-attaining readers and pupils who join the school with English as an additional language (EAL) catch up. They quickly gain in fluency and experience success with reading. Pupils read regularly to staff with books well matched to their age and abilities. The youngest pupils become familiar with a range of stories and rhymes; these spark a love of reading that continues throughout the school. In lessons, including in the early years, pupils’ motivation and attitudes to learning are excellent. Older pupils discuss their learning maturely, debate widely and share their views and thoughts. They listen attentively and respectfully when other adults and pupils are speaking.
* Staff have high expectations of all pupils. Pupils rise to these. They work hard and achieve well from Nursery to Year 2. Staff encourage the talents of pupils. As a result, pupils flourish to ‘be the best me I can be’. Pupils are extremely well mannered. They are eager learners and behave well in lessons. Kindness is celebrated here. Pupils share equipment well at playtimes.
* Pupils know and practise the new ‘pocket principles’ values of being kind, responsible and ready to learn. They actively take on leadership roles. For example, from Reception, pupils vote for their peers to be well-being champions, eco bees and school councillors. Many pupils are proud to be class monitors who help to lead and organise daily activities.
* Learning areas are well organised. Right from the early years, children settle quickly into school. Outdoor learning in early years is inviting. For example, children enjoy playing with wet and dry sand and jumping on the trampoline. Teachers use these opportunities to good effect to develop children’s vocabulary. Children learn to handle equipment and tools with care and precision. They confidently use play cameras and hoover in the role play area. Parents commented on the wide range of stimulating learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Inspectors agree.
* Many curriculum plans are well sequenced. Where this is not yet the case, the early years leader is working in collaboration with subject leaders to ensure smooth transition from early years to key stage 1, in order to deepen pupils’ knowledge and skills over time.
* Children get off to a good start in Nursery. Staff develop partnerships with parents and carers from the beginning. They take effective steps to meet children’s needs. The children are active learners. They concentrate and keep trying until they achieve what they set out to do. Children in Reception learn to read, write and count straight away. They use the sounds they know to read and write simple words and captions. They can count and order numbers to 10.
* Reading has a high priority in the school. Staff have the expert knowledge they need in order to teach phonics and early reading well. Plans show clearly what children should know term by term. There is a clear sequence of learning in lessons that all staff follow. Staff use a range of assessments to identify when pupils need extra help to keep up. The extra support helps pupils, including those who struggle to read, to develop their confidence and read more fluently. Many books the pupils read match the letter sounds they know. The school is currently moving to a new phonics programme with new books that will all match the sounds children know. Younger pupils respond to books well, because staff read in an engaging way.
* Pupils’ behaviour around school is good. They are polite and respectful. Staff make sure that pupils understand routines and expectations. From early years, children are encouraged to think about how they are feeing and how their behaviour affects others around them. Pupils develop confidence in expressing their feelings, ideas and views.
* Leaders have not ensured that there is a consistent, whole-school approach to the teaching of handwriting. There is variation in how teachers model handwriting, which leads to too much variability in pupils’ handwriting. Leaders should make sure that staff follow a consistent, whole-school approach to teaching handwriting. ν
* The attendance of some pupils is too low. As a result, these pupils miss learning and have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should continue to work with these pupils and their parents to help improve their attendance.
* Children in the early years get off to a good start in their education, although the curriculum is not as well sequenced as it could be. High expectations of behaviour are set from day one. Children take turns and share equipment well. They enjoy using the wide range of resources provided to be creative and imaginative.
* Leaders have not ensured that the lowest attainers, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND receive the support needed to master the necessary skills. Consequently, some pupils do not make the progress they should. The curriculum is not planned coherently or sequenced well in some subjects. Leaders have not identified the key vocabulary that they want pupils to know and remember. This reduces pupils’ ability to build and retain important knowledge and skills. Leaders should ensure that all of the curriculum builds pupils’ knowledge progressively from Nursery to Year 2 and that subject vocabulary is included.