

Inspection of a good school: Ash Green Primary Academy

The Lea, Brough Lane, Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 8BX

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 May 2022

Outcome

Ash Green Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school are safe, happy and highly motivated. They know that leaders have high expectations for them, and they want to do the very best they can. They find learning exciting and are keen to contribute to lessons. Pupils are confident and resilient. They understand that 'having a go' is more important than always being right. They know that their teachers will help them if they get something wrong. Pupils say that their teachers are kind and caring.

Pupils exemplify the culture of the school daily. They are kind to others and show respect, tolerance and acceptance of others' differences. Pupils feel safe at this school. They understand the difference between friends falling out and bullying. They say that bullying rarely happens, but when it does it is dealt with quickly.

The school provides numerous opportunities for pupils to develop their personal skills. Pupils aspire to become members of the Learning Council or to become Reading Heroes. They enjoy many clubs, such as reading club, experience club, games club, drama club and a range of sporting activities. Pupils value the regular educational visits. They talk with enthusiasm of long-remembered trips and what they learned.

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

Leaders offer an ambitious curriculum for all children that inspires learning and makes sure that pupils are ready for what comes next in their education. An unrelenting focus on reading underpins this aim. Children start their journey towards becoming a fluent and enthusiastic reader from the moment they join early years. Leaders have developed an ethos of 'every child is a reader'. They recognise that pupils of any age can be at an early stage of reading and make sure that all teachers are trained in the school's chosen phonics programme. This means that all pupils get the support they need to catch up. As a result, pupils have a real love of reading. They actively choose

to read widely and often, supported by daily story time sessions, story sacks, two well-stocked libraries and a popular reading club.

The mathematics curriculum has been revised to further improve pupils' progress with an approach of 'achieving the best together'. Leaders have made sure that early mathematical skills are taught quickly to the youngest children. For instance, the inspector saw children in the early years learning about 'first, then and now' to support their understanding of addition. Teachers make sure that pupils understand what they are learning and why they are learning it. As a result, they can reason, solve different types of problems and make connections with daily experience. Many pupils name mathematics as their favourite subject.

Leaders have ensured that foundation subjects have a carefully sequenced curriculum in place. However, not all have laid the building blocks of subject learning to be taught in the early years.

Sometimes, pupils do not learn and remember as much as they could. This happens when pupils do not think back to what they have already learned before. Leaders have recognised this and put plans in place to make sure that teaching methods support greater retention of learning in these cases.

Teachers are skilled at checking and assessing pupils' understanding in lessons to make sure that misconceptions are addressed quickly. Regular assessment of pupils' progress informs the next steps in learning and adaptations to the curriculum that might be required.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported. The curriculum is carefully adapted to meet pupils' individual needs. They receive effective support in the classroom to help them access an age-appropriate curriculum. For example, in phonics lessons all children learn the phase sounds together, with support if necessary. Extra teaching is then provided for those who may be at an earlier stage, or who have gaps in their learning.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils nearly always behave well in lessons and around the school. Attitudes to learning are very positive.

Personal development is integral to every pupil's learning. It is threaded through all aspects of the curriculum. For instance, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils have been learning about lots of different careers. Year 3 pupils are preparing to visit a mosque and speak to the imam. Pupils understand the world they live in and how it is different to the world of others. They know and understand the principles of fundamental British values and can explain how they apply these in their daily lives.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Children are at the heart of the safeguarding process. Staff are a well-trained and highly effective team of experts who are alert to any concerns. Staff quickly identify pupils who need early help or are at risk of harm. They take rapid and appropriate action when required, working with external partners to ensure that children and their families get the support that they need. Pupils learn how to keep safe, including when online, through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme.

Leaders have completed safer recruitment training and make sure that all appropriate checks on staff are completed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- Not all subject plans take account of the learning that takes place in early years. Leaders should identify how and when subject building blocks can be introduced in this phase.
- In some subjects, pupils do not learn and remember as much as they could. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum design in these subjects clearly identifies the essential knowledge that pupils need to know so that they can access future learning and remember more of what has been taught.

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 or outstanding 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Ash Green Primary School, to be good in April 2015.

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	142990
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10227738
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	451
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Guy Weir
Headteacher	Jodie Cope
Website	www.ashgreenprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Ash Green Primary Academy converted to become an academy in December 2017. When its predecessor school, Ash Green Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Ash Green Primary Academy is an academy within the Societas Trust.
- The headteacher was appointed in March 2020.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders, members of staff and pupils. The inspector held a meeting with three members of the local governing board and three members of the board of trustees, including the chief executive officer.
- Deep dives in reading, mathematics and religious education were completed. These included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons and a scrutiny of pupils’

work. The inspector also met with pupils to discuss their learning in these subjects and listened to pupils read.

- The inspector also reviewed the PSHE curriculum, looked at pupils' work in the subject and spoke with the curriculum leader.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including leaders' plans to improve the school, their self-evaluation of the school's work, curriculum plans and the school website. Minutes of reports and reports from an external adviser were also checked.
- When inspecting safeguarding, the inspector considered the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe, the checks made to ensure safe recruitment, and the quality of staff training.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the end of the first day of the inspection. She considered the responses, including the free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The inspector considered 36 responses to the staff survey and 81 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Mel Ford, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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