

Waterside Primary School

Eastwood Road, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST1 3JS

Inspection dates

14 to 15 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Pupils, staff, parents and school leaders are united in the Waterside approach of 'being the best that you can be'. This has resulted in outstanding outcomes for all groups of pupils who enter the school, including those with very low starting points.
- Leaders at all levels unite in their steadfast determination to 'empower learners to achieve their dreams'. A 'no excuse culture' permeates all aspects of school life.
- A very well-planned curriculum, placing a high focus on the acquisition of vocabulary and key concepts, ensures that all teachers are clear as to what they need to teach. A focus on reading, arts and sports ensures that all pupils have memorable learning experiences and make substantial progress.
- Leaders' monitoring and coaching of teaching has been successful in securing consistent high-quality teaching throughout the school. Pupils enjoy lessons and have excellent attitudes to learning.
- Thorough analysis of each pupils' learning in all subjects, with well-planned interventions and guidance given for improvement, are contributory factors to pupils' outstanding outcomes.
- Children get off to a flying start in the early years. Through the correct balance of play, underpinned by focused learning tasks, children make excellent progress.
- The unfailing consistency with which the school applies its values enables pupils to be very well prepared for secondary school. Their personal development, behaviour and welfare are exemplary.
- The school benefits from very effective governance, which holds leaders to account for the outcomes of spending decisions.
- Leaders have correctly identified that there is further scope for pupils with low prior attainment and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to improve their handwriting and presentation skills.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Place greater emphasis in lessons on ensuring that low prior-attaining pupils and pupils with SEND improve their handwriting and presentation skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Passion, determination and resilience among leaders at all levels have made Waterside Primary School an outstanding place for pupils to learn. The headteacher has won the hearts and minds of the whole school community by ensuring that pupils' needs are placed at the centre of all decision making. The ambition for every child to succeed is shared with parents, who are seen as true partners in their children's learning.
- Leaders have an incisive and accurate understanding of the school's context. Regular and thorough analysis of provision and of the impact of actions, identified on the school development plan, is typical of leaders' commitment and steadfast determination to continuously improve.
- Systems for tackling any pupil underachievement are very effective. If an individual pupil falls behind, interventions are put in place immediately, so they catch up quickly.
- The comprehensive package of training given to staff arises out of rigorous analysis of pupils' progress and well-targeted performance management objectives. Teachers are closely involved in improving and sharing their own and others' excellent practice. This expertise is shared with other schools that the headteacher supports in her work as a national leader of education.
- The school works very well with parents and carers and offers 'Seeing is believing' workshops to bring them up to speed with what learning takes place in the classroom. Parents unanimously say that they are given a lot of information through well-documented blogs and meetings with teachers on what is being learned in school. This enables them to support learning at home.
- Learning experiences are carefully structured for all year groups so that new knowledge builds on what has been previously taught. The well-thought-out curriculum is extensively enriched to create opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils appreciate the meaning of British values, such as the democratic processes they engage in when forming the school parliament.
- Leaders and staff are highly effective in implementing a curriculum approach that makes sense to the pupils. For example, in Year 4, pupils were asked to research whether it was a good idea to keep animals in captivity. Having been taught how to organise their thinking through lessons in philosophy, they were able to give clear reasons as to the benefits and disadvantages.
- Equality of opportunity is apparent in the work of the school. Pupils appreciate the benefits of diversity of life in modern Britain. When learning about differences, one pupil said: 'If all people were the same, we would never be able to tell them apart.'
- The highly effective leadership of provision for pupils with SEND is very responsive to individuals' needs. Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants are well trained. Extensive links with external agencies provide advice, which is acted on immediately. As a consequence, pupils with SEND make substantial progress.
- The use of extra funding aimed at improving life chances for disadvantaged pupils is

used effectively and accounted for. Leaders pinpoint the barriers to learning that these pupils face and immediately set about addressing them. This ensures that disadvantaged pupils progress very well in their learning and make impressive gains in their personal development.

- Leaders use the additional primary sport and physical education (PE) funding very well. Activities are underpinned by the Paralympic values of fair play and determination. This has a very positive impact on pupils' personal and social development. Pupils learn how to be good team members, exercise self-control and know the importance of healthy eating. An extensive, diverse and tempting range of clubs ensure that pupils' participation in sport is high.

Governance of the school

- Governors are tenacious in their desire to secure the very best for their pupils. They are actively involved in all aspects of self-evaluation. Governors are insightful and knowledgeable about their statutory duties. They ensure that the headteacher's performance management is robust.
- Governors have first-hand knowledge of pupils' learning and progress. Due to the high quality reports that they receive from the headteacher, they are able to both challenge and support the school. Governors use this information to ask detailed questions on all matters, including the quality of teaching, pupils' progress and safeguarding. They have a very good understanding of school finances, including how the pupil premium, special educational needs, and primary sports PE funding is spent.
- Governors systematically gather the views of parents, pupils and staff so that they are aware of the views of stakeholders. They are tenacious champions, dedicated to improving the life chances of all pupils. Governors have given thoughtful consideration to the expansion of the school. Plans are underway to ensure that more pupils in the school community have access to the high quality of education that Waterside Primary School provides.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- For governors, leaders and staff, the creation of a safe, protective and vigilant culture is a primary focus. Underpinning this, the school's systems, policies and procedures are robust and extremely well implemented. Despite the fact that the school does not feel that it has had a prompt response from the local authority in relation to referrals it has made, leaders of the school ensure that vulnerable pupils get the help that they need.
- Recruitment checks are completed thoroughly and efficiently. Staff are clear about what to do should a pupil approach them with a safeguarding issue. Parents trust leaders and staff to do whatever is in the best interest of the child because they know issues are handled sensitively.
- The curriculum supports pupils to learn about the potential dangers of gang cultures, substance abuse, internet safety and the lasting effects of bullying.
- Leaders work very effectively with parents to ensure that children are safe in school.

Parents are directed to any help that they might need on the school's website, which contains a lot of links that parents can use to ensure the online safety of their children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers have high aspirations for their pupils in all subjects. No time is wasted in lessons, because teachers are clear about what is being taught and explain this to pupils. For example, in Year 3, pupils were learning about the structure of the earth. In order to make the learning 'stick', teachers compared the earth's layers to a well-known chocolate bar. This enabled pupils to retain facts in their long-term memory.
- Teachers are passionate about their work and use their engaging and enthusiastic teaching styles to great effect to capture pupils' interests. They combine these with excellent subject knowledge in order to promote deep learning and understanding, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Teaching over time is excellent because it is underpinned by an exceptionally well-planned curriculum. 'Non-negotiable' expectations of learning are built into the planning, so that there is a coherent order to learning. The school's culture of 'no excuses' is evident in lessons, where all groups of pupils are pushed to do their very best.
- The school's 'rainbow values' of respect, excellence, friendship, courage, determination, inspiration and equality are evident in daily lessons across the school. When learning becomes challenging, pupils are resilient and do not give up. They are extremely well equipped in these situations, drawing on previous learning, classroom resources and support from their peers, teachers and teaching support assistants.
- Teachers are skilled at knowing which bits of knowledge to teach to ensure that pupils are proficient in the necessary steps that support future learning. Accurate assessments of pupils' learning pinpoint exactly where misconceptions occur and immediate help is then given. All interventions take place either before or after school so that pupils do not miss any learning in lessons.
- Teaching assistants are an integral part of the extremely successful teaching team. They provide highly effective support, including for disadvantaged pupils, pupils who need to catch up with their peers, and pupils with SEND. Senior leaders are skilled teachers. They guide all staff to ensure that the intent of the curriculum is met.
- Occasionally, lower-attaining pupils and pupils with SEND do not pay sufficient attention to their writing and do not adhere to the school's presentation policy. This has been picked up by senior leaders in their meticulous monitoring of teaching and learning.
- The teaching of reading is very effective throughout the school. Teachers place great emphasis on ensuring that pupils use a wide range of reading strategies to develop both vocabulary and comprehension skills. Pupils are able to decode unfamiliar words speedily. This is because of the highly effective phonics teaching in early years and key stage 1.
- The teaching of mathematics is characterised by a consistent approach in developing fluency, accuracy, reasoning and recall. Wall displays in classrooms remind pupils of

the strategies that they need to use when working out problems. Explanations, demonstrations, and the use of visual representations enable pupils to grasp mathematical concepts rapidly.

- High-quality teaching in PE, both by teachers and sports' coaches, enables pupils to acquire a full range of skills and an understanding of rules. Relationships throughout the school are exemplary.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Staff and pupils act with respect for each other at all times because they embrace each other's differences. Pupils said that during Ramadan the school showed genuine concern for those pupils who were fasting. One pupil, speaking for many, said, 'We all respect one another's beliefs.'
- Pupils feel safe and are safe. They are reflective and caring. The school's aim to develop global citizens is apparent in their mature approaches to dealing with any form of conflict. Bullying is very rare in the school and, should it occur, it is dealt with immediately
- Pupils have a clear determination to succeed because, from early years up to Year 6, they are encouraged to have high self-esteem and 'reach for the stars'. The school's values are central to how the pupils approach learning. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and successful learners. They have high aspirations for future careers, with several saying they want to be astronomers and palaeontologists.
- Pupils have many opportunities for leadership, such as being members of the school council and school parliament. The manifestos of these two groups demonstrate pupils' knowledge of how their skills can help others. Through lessons exploring social, emotional and health education, pupils learn that empathy and fairness will help them gain respect from their peers.
- Pupils know about healthy lifestyles and talk eagerly about diets that constitute nutritious eating. During mental health week, they spoke about the importance of sharing concerns with teachers. One pupil said, 'Keeping things inside is not healthy.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils, parents and staff are very positive about behaviour at the school. Pupils' ability to manage their own behaviour in lessons and around the school is noteworthy. From the start, pupils learn how to take responsibility for their behaviour.
- Parents say that their children love coming to school. This is borne out by their attendance, which is above the national average. Additional support and strategies aimed at pupils who miss too much school have a powerful impact.
- Pupils' conduct throughout the day is exemplary. From the minute they enter the

school gates they suitably adapt their behaviour to different situations. For example, in PE lessons, pupils participate with gusto but still remember to act promptly in response to adults' instructions and to listen attentively.

- Behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Pupils want to learn because they are interested, motivated and have been taught how to learn. They concentrate intensely and are active participants in lessons. They work very well both in groups and individually.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils' outstanding personal development is mirrored by the high standards they attain in reading, writing and mathematics, often from very low starting points. In 2018, the progress of pupils in reading and mathematics was very high for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.
- In both key stage 1 and key stage 2, in the 2018 national tests and teacher assessments, standards were high and progress was outstanding in reading and mathematics. In writing, pupils made slightly less progress. Leaders quickly put plans in place, and this became the focus of the school development plan. Current progress in writing is very good. This is because there has been a whole-school approach to ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to write what they have read.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve high standards and they make very good progress in reading and mathematics. In 2018, their progress in reading and mathematics placed them in the top 20% in the country.
- Topic work shows a breadth and depth of high-quality learning across the curriculum. Pupils are confidently applying what they have learned, using the success criteria of Bronze, Silver and Gold challenges. To excel even further, they are given challenges that are Platinum and Diamond.
- The three-year average mathematics attainment score was in the top 10% of schools nationally. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics over three years was well above the national average.
- The most able pupils consistently make strong progress and demonstrate considerable depth in learning, knowledge and understanding. When learning about Antarctica they were able to give reasoned answers to questions such as, 'Why is plastic damaging the environment?'
- In Year 5, pupils studying Peter Bunzl's, 'The Cogheart Adventures', discussed knowledgeably the various devices used to capture readers' interest, which they then applied to their writing.
- Pupils with SEND make and sustain strong progress. Carefully designated individual learning plans and meticulous tracking of progress are used by leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of support given. These pupils make substantial gains in acquiring vocabulary and developing their mathematical and reading skills.
- Pupils exceed the national average in the phonics screening check. They have very positive attitudes to reading, and their comprehension skills are as strong as their decoding skills. Leaders' creation of memorable learning experiences for pupils, such as enabling them to meet the author Michael Morpurgo, ignites the pupils' passion to master the art of writing and become authors in their own right. Pupils make great

strides in structuring highly effective pieces of extended writing. This was seen in their research of topics of their choice, such as that of the tribal artwork in South Africa.

- Pupils have quick mental recall in mathematics. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils with low starting points expertly used their prior mathematical knowledge to convert percentages to fractions.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Outstanding leadership enables children in the early years to get off to an excellent start. Children settle quickly and thrive in the stimulating and caring environment. No time is wasted in making sure that they learn the 'Waterside way'. They have very firm foundations of learning and are well prepared for Year 1.
- From very low starting points on entry, all children make exceptional progress and a large majority achieve a good level of development. This is because staff gather and make the most of a wealth of information to identify rapidly what the children can and cannot do. They then plan and adjust teaching and tasks accordingly, in order to meet the children's needs.
- A significant contributory factor to the excellent learning of all groups of pupils is the high quality of talk between all adults and children. Children have very good role models in the adults, who teach them how to talk in full sentences and develop their vocabulary in all areas of learning. As a result, children acquire a wide vocabulary, which prepares them well for future learning.
- Not a minute of time is wasted. Teachers use every learning opportunity to ensure that children acquire new vocabulary. For example, in Nursery during snack time, the teacher read the children a story and discussed the meaning of words such as 'dainty', which they then used in their play outdoors.
- Teaching of the basic skills of reading writing and mathematics is very strong because adults know how young children learn best. All focused group sessions are underpinned by high-quality visual and practical resources, which children use in their learning both indoors and outdoors. In phonics sessions, children listen attentively, repeat sounds that they have learned and then have a go at writing them. This also enables children to decode words that they come across in their reading.
- In mathematics, children learn how to recognise numbers and use mathematical language correctly. In the Reception class, children are already understanding and applying their knowledge of doubling and halving when counting the spots on ladybirds.
- Every opportunity is taken to develop pupils' personal, social and emotional skills. Children are praised for their attempts at trying out new things, and this has a very positive effect on their self-esteem and resilience. Additional funding for disadvantaged children is used very well and ensures that they make outstanding progress from low starting points. A proportion of the funds has been used for nurture groups, which has enabled children to regulate their emotions. Other funding has been spent on ensuring that children have access to a wide range of reading books, as well as reading individually with an adult.
- The high expectations evident throughout the school have their starting points in the

early years. Adults capture and encourage children's curiosity by designing activities based on children's interest levels. As children play, adults remain sharply focused on what they want them to learn, and they support them to experience success.

- Adults ask well-chosen questions to help children develop their thinking and language skills. Efficient routines mean that children settle in quickly and know what is expected of them.
- Parents are seen as true partners in learning and partnership with parents is strong. They are regularly informed of the progress that their children make through very detailed learning journals of their children's work. Parents know that their children are very well looked after and are safe in school.

School details

Unique reference number	123993
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10088422

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	362
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Sarah Vaughan
Headteacher	Joanne Knowles
Telephone number	01782 234 630
Website	www.waterside.stoke.sch.uk
Email address	office@watersideprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 July 2018

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average primary school. It is oversubscribed and currently plans are in place to extend it.
- Early years provision is part-time in Nursery and full-time in Reception.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than the national average. Very few pupils are at the early stages of acquiring English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes and small group interventions in order to gather a wide range of evidence about what it is like to be a pupil at this school. Most visits were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with leaders, governors, the school improvement partner and other members of staff.
- Informal discussions were held with several parents. In addition, the 43 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 23 free-text responses, received during the inspection, were considered.
- The 36 responses to Ofsted’s online staff questionnaire were considered. In addition, pupils’ views were sought through discussions and an analysis of the 273 responses from pupils to the school’s own questionnaire.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were heard reading and samples of pupils’ work in all years were scrutinised.
- A range of documents was reviewed, including: information on pupils’ progress across the school; the school’s self-evaluation and improvement plans; and the school records relating to behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

B Matusiak-Varley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Bourdon-Pierre	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Minton	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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