

Inspection of a good school: Waterhouses C of E Primary Academy

Waterfall Lane, Waterhouses, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST10 3HY

Inspection dates:

8 January 2020

Outcome

Waterhouses C of E Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring and welcoming school. Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous. Parents are very pleased and, rightly, say their children enjoy school. Leaders, staff and pupils are committed to the school's motto of, 'love, hope, respect and trust'.

There is hardly any unkind behaviour or bullying. Pupils, rightly, told inspectors that the staff really care and are always there to help you.

The school has strong links with its Church of England faith community. Pupils enjoy contributing to the wider community through charity fundraising.

The staff are ambitious for pupils to succeed. They help them to behave very well and work hard. Pupils achieve well, but some could still do better in mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

Children in the early years get off to a good start. Phonics is well organised in the early years and key stage 1. However, some pupils need better support when struggling to read new or unfamiliar words.

Pupils achieve very well in physical education (PE) and sport. This is reflected in the school being awarded a national gold games mark. The school makes very good use of its onsite swimming pool to make sure every pupil learns to swim.

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

Leaders and staff have been successful in making sure that the curriculum takes account of the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. The two-year sequencing of topics ensures that pupils do not repeat the same work when moving up a year. The curriculum is well planned for most pupils in English, mathematics, religious education (RE) and PE. The deputy headteacher is extending outdoor provision, using the woodland areas of the school site. This is helping pupils to learn more in science and geography.

Leaders and governors work closely with other schools in the trust to share best practice. This helps leaders identify the right priorities for improvement. One such priority is to continue raising standards in mathematics. Pupils could still do better in this subject, and the mathematics leader is addressing this well. Pupils' work shows that teachers have high expectations. Pupils are improving their mental arithmetic skills, using an online program to rehearse number facts and times tables. Pupils enjoy mathematics and problem-solving. However, they are not being taught to think logically when tackling problems. The most capable pupils are not asked the right questions to help them organise their thinking when solving problems. The 'stars of the week' celebrates pupils who do well compared with their previous results.

Most pupils make good progress learning to read. Children in the early years class do well and are taught phonics skills well. The teaching of phonics is well organised in key stage 1. This lays good foundations for pupils when they join key stage 2. However, some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or those who struggle to read fluently, do not always know how to apply their phonics skills when blending sounds together in new or unfamiliar words.

The school promotes healthy living and physical exercise very well. Sport and PE are notable strengths. There are well-devised PE lessons every week for each class. Older pupils have great opportunities to play sports. Additional funding for PE and sport is allocated well to provide expert swimming instruction for every class.

Children in the early years are provided with a stimulating range of indoor and outdoor activities. The children learn with their friends and really look forward to coming to school each day. Parents are, rightly, very pleased with their children's early educational experiences.

Parents are very pleased with the support that pupils with SEND receive across the school's curriculum. The staff are well trained to identify any difficulties or barriers to learning and put in place the right support for pupils. The key focus now is on helping pupils with SEND to apply their phonics skills better when reading.

Pupils are very well behaved. Leaders and staff are very good at supporting pupils' personal and social skills. The curriculum, including in RE, helps pupils appreciate different faiths, beliefs and cultures. Pupils are very proud of the many roles they play to support the school community. These include, playground buddies, house captains, librarians and the worship council.

The trust, governors and leaders motivate and support the staff team very well. Staff morale is high. The staff appreciate the efforts leaders are making to ensure that they have a balanced and fair workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The staff do everything they can to make sure pupils are safe and happy. They teach pupils to keep themselves safe when using computers. Pupils feel confident in approaching any member of staff if they are worried or have concerns.

Regular training ensures that the staff are vigilant and know which services to contact if they need to do so. Staff vetting arrangements are robust and help to ensure that pupils are protected.

The staff in the early years and the Sunshine Club, a before- and after-school club, are well qualified in child protection and first-aid for young children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils in key stage 2 make less progress in mathematics than they do in reading and writing. The most able pupils should be achieving higher standards. Teachers plan mathematics tasks that challenge and make pupils think hard, but do not ask the right questions to help them solve more complex number problems. Leaders and staff should ensure that assessments, teachers' questioning, and tasks provided for pupils are carefully designed to address this in order to raise standards further in mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- Some pupils find it difficult to read independently when they come across new or unfamiliar words. This includes pupils with SEND and some pupils who struggle to apply their phonics knowledge to blend letter sounds together. Leaders should build on the good start pupils make learning phonics skills in the early years and key stage 1. Teachers and support staff should now focus more on those pupils who struggle to read independently. Leaders should ensure that all pupils are better able to apply their phonics skills when blending letter sounds so they can read a broader range of words.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, 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 convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Waterhouses C of E Primary School, to be good on 4 December 2013.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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	143622
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10122518
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	91
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jane Shepherd MBE
Headteacher	David Wood
Website	www.waterhouses.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is the school's first inspection since it converted to become an academy as part of the QEGSMAT trust. There have been significant leaderships and staff changes since the predecessor school's previous inspection in 2013.
- This is a very small school. Each of its four classes comprises pupils from mixed-year groups. Staffordshire local authority has a mixture of primary, first and middle schools. As a result, when pupils finish Year 4 in this school, some parents choose to send their pupils to another middle school when they start Year 5. This accounts for the very small number of pupils taking national tests at the end of Year 6.
- The early years class includes three-year-olds who attend part-time or full-time, and four and five-year-olds, who all attend full-time (the Reception Year).
- The school runs before- and after-school provision, the Sunshine Club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held discussions with members of the governing board and QEGSMAT trustees. These included the chief executive officer and finance director of the trust, the chair of the local governing board, and a member of board of trustees. Other meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, and teachers who

manage different subjects. A meeting was held with the teacher responsible for managing SEND provision.

- The lead inspector spoke with an administrator to check staff vetting and safeguarding records. A meeting was held with two of the designated safeguarding leaders, to consider the effectiveness of child protection and safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors spoke with some parents to seek their views about the school and analysed 40 responses to the online survey, Parent View. Inspectors spoke with some staff and considered the six responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors focused on reading and the teaching of phonics, as well as in-depth investigations into mathematics and PE.
- Both inspectors visited parts of lessons in all classes. Some visits were made jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work and heard two groups of pupils read. The lead inspector met with two groups of pupils to discuss their mathematics work, their views about the school, and their behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness, the school's development plan, the trust's scheme of delegation to its local governing board and curriculum plans.

Inspection team

Charalambos Loizou, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Ashley

Ofsted Inspector

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