

Inspection of Picknalls First School

Oldfields Road, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 7QL

Inspection dates: 28–29 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

You can see from their smiles as they are welcomed by staff that pupils enjoy school. Parents, understandably, are happy with the school. The staff are ambitious for pupils to succeed and broaden their knowledge of the wider world. Pupils study many interesting topics. In Year 2, for example, pupils learn about Samuel Pepys and how he wrote what pupils eloquently described as a 'first-hand account of the Great Fire of London'.

Phonics is taught well in the early years and key stage 1. This helps pupils become independent and confident readers. Pupils write about many different topics, but some could write more accurately and in depth. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics and reach high standards.

Pupils have great opportunities to do physical education (PE), sport and learn to swim. They are offered many challenges in PE lessons. Pupils are energised by the superb range of sporting enrichment like golf, boccia, hockey, archery and more.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They are polite and courteous. Pupils play safely and enjoy chatting to friends, staff and visitors. There is hardly any bullying because the staff make sure pupils are kind to each other. Leaders and staff are very good at keeping pupils safe.

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

At the heart of leaders' ambitions are pupils and their families. Pupils thrive and the school's aims, 'achieve, believe and care', are at the centre of everything this school is about. Pupils behave exceptionally well, work hard and achieve well.

The headteacher and senior staff provide strong leadership and are ambitious to continue improving. The Uttoxeter Learning Trust, its board of trustees and governors have high expectations and hold leaders and staff to account.

The school's 'connected curriculum' helps pupils build on what they have learned before. Pupils in Year 1 go 'on safari', learning about the geography of Africa. In Year 3, ancient Greece is brought to life through the 'groovy Greeks' topic. Pupils recall interesting facts because the curriculum really does connect with their learning and interests.

Nursery and Reception children do well. The children enjoy varied indoor and outdoor learning activities. Children are confident and chatty and form positive relationships with classmates and adults. Role play helps children develop their confidence and language. The 'pretend supermarket' is put to good use as children identify the correct coins when 'buying fruit'.

Phonics teaching is well organised in key stage 1. This helps pupils in Years 3 and 4 become confident, independent readers. The 'river of reading' provides good-quality modern and traditional books which are well matched to pupils' ages and abilities.

Pupils' writing is improving but is not always accurate or consistent enough. Teachers should pay more attention to helping pupils develop a consistent, legible writing style. Pupils make some unnecessary spelling errors. In some class discussions teachers do not help pupils think deeply enough to broaden their knowledge, so they can write more in greater depth.

Mathematics is well taught. Pupils achieve exceptionally well. National attainment outcomes at key stage 1 typically place the school in the top 20% or 10% of schools nationally.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get very good support. Provision is well managed. The staff provide a good range of intervention programmes to help pupils with their reading, writing and number work.

However, some pupils who get stuck in lessons do not always receive timely interventions from staff. This is an area that leaders should focus on when monitoring teachers' and pupils' work.

Pupils achieve very well in PE and sport. The staff ensure that pupils develop healthy bodies and minds. The school's trophy cabinet is bursting with sporting awards. There is a fantastic range of enrichment clubs that include fitness; 'mini-minds', to support pupils' well-being; activity club for early years; playground games and more.

Pupils are confident and happy in school. They are safe and secure because of the care and attention provided by staff and volunteers. The staff always treat pupils and their families with dignity and respect.

Pupils' personal development is a strength. Pupils have great opportunities to become school councillors. They are very clear about British values of democracy and respect for people whatever their colour, beliefs or background. Pupils make a huge contribution to their school and community. They can become well-being champions; ICT buddies to help younger pupils; school councillors; eco warriors and more.

Pupils contribute to the local community. The choir has performed at the racecourse and was interviewed by an international broadcaster when opening the day's racing event. Pupils contribute each Christmas when singing to residents in care homes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and the trust check that staff, governors and volunteers are suitable to work with children. The staff know what to do if they are concerned about a child.

Adults make sure that pupils are safe in the playground during breaktimes. We saw pupils playing and socialising very happily during these times and around the school. The staff are very good at identifying signs that may concern them about a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding leaders follow up concerns swiftly. Leaders work closely with external agencies to get support for pupils and families who may need additional help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils achieve well in reading and writing, but there is still room for further improvement in writing. Leaders and staff should now build on the good practice that exists to make sure that pupils develop a more consistent handwriting style from an early age. Teachers should also focus more on improving the accuracy of pupils' spelling. There is also potential for the most able pupils, particularly in key stage 2, to write more independently and at length to prepare them better for upper key stage 2. Teachers should consider providing more opportunities for pupils to broaden their vocabulary in lessons. This is to help them write more extensively and in greater depth.
- Teachers plan their lessons well and the curriculum is well organised so that pupils in all classes achieve well. There is scope now for leaders and teachers to focus more on how well pupils learn in lessons. There are occasions when teachers and support staff miss opportunities to intervene when pupils are stuck or find new learning difficult. Leaders regularly monitor how well teachers teach and should now consider evaluating more sharply what works well and what needs to improve. This is to ensure that teachers and support staff know when to intervene to help pupils learn in greater depth and help pupils if there are any gaps or misunderstandings.

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	143952
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10122436
Type of school	First
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	289
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sidney Slater
Headteacher	Anne Tapp
Website	www.picknalls.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Picknalls became a sponsored academy in April 2017 as one of the founding members of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust. This is the school's first inspection since becoming an academy. The predecessor school was maintained by Staffordshire local authority and was inspected in April 2016. That inspection judged it to be a good school.
- The school uses an off-site alternative provider for a very small number of pupils who have SEND and who from time to time attend this provider.
- There is early years provision on the school site for two-year-olds, but this was not inspected as it is run by another provider.
- The school's own early years provision comprises a Nursery class for three- and four-year-olds, who attend either full- or part-time; and two Reception classes for four- and five-year-old children, who all attend full-time.
- The school accommodates a privately managed before- and after-school club, which receives a separate inspection. Some pupils from the school attend this club.

Information about this inspection

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

- We held discussions with the chair of the board of trustees; governors, including the chair of the local governing body; the chief executive officer of the trust; the headteacher; deputy headteacher; early years leader and teachers who manage different subjects.
- We spoke with the headteacher and the bursar to check staff vetting and safeguarding records. A meeting was held with three designated safeguarding leaders and the teacher responsible for managing SEND provision.
- We spoke with some parents to seek their views about the school and analysed responses and written comments from parents using the online survey, Parent View. We spoke with staff to discuss their views about the support they receive and their workload. The lead inspector also considered staff responses to an online survey.
- We focused on reading and the teaching of phonics, as well as in-depth investigations into mathematics, writing and PE.
- We visited parts of lessons in classes. Some visits were made jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. We looked at samples of pupils' writing and mathematics work. We heard a group of pupils read and observed the headteacher hearing younger pupils read. We also met with groups of pupils, both formally and informally at break and lunchtimes, to discuss their work and views about behaviour and bullying and how safe they feel.
- The lead inspector scrutinised records of visits and welfare checks carried out by leaders and the trust's education welfare officer when visiting the off-site alternative provider. This was to ensure that pupils who attend this provider are safe and their SEND provision is managed well enough.
- We considered a range of documentation including leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness; the school's improvement plan and subject action plans; leaders' monitoring reports relating to teaching and learning; the trust's scheme of delegation; and some headteacher reports to the board of trustees and governors.

Inspection team

Charalambos Loizou, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Deborah Allen	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Harwood	Her Majesty's Inspector

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