

Inspection of Talbot First School

Church Lane, Kingstone, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 8QJ

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like being with children of different ages. They care for one another well. Parents and carers, and pupils said the school is like a family. A typical comment was: 'The staff go above and beyond and have created a place of warmth, happiness, safety and learning.'

Pupils enjoy school. Staff manage behaviour in a consistent and positive manner. As a result, the school is calm, and pupils behave well. Bullying is rare but, when it happens, staff deal with it immediately.

Things are getting better at Talbot First School. Standards in reading and mathematics have risen. However, changes to the curriculum in other subjects are too recent to have had an impact on what pupils have learned and remembered. Leaders are ambitious about what pupils should achieve.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about the activities they do. For example, they enjoy learning to play the ukulele, going to forest school and 'chatting' to the school dog. Despite the range of experiences offered to pupils, teachers could do even more to develop pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures.

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

The interim executive headteacher has made effective changes to the curriculum. He has rightly prioritised pupils' learning in reading and mathematics. The curriculum in these subjects is carefully thought out. Teachers ensure that knowledge is being taught in the right order to help pupils remember their learning. Leaders have begun to make sure that learning is as strong in other subjects such as history and art. However, this work is too recent to ensure pupils' knowledge and skills build well over time.

The teaching of reading is a high priority. Pupils begin to learn phonics right from the start of the Reception Year. Staff teach phonics well. This ensures that pupils become fluent and confident readers. Teachers check pupils' understanding to make sure that they do not fall behind. If they need extra help, staff provide support straight away. Pupils have lots of opportunities to practise their reading. This helps them to become stronger readers as they move through the school.

Pupils understand the school's values well. For example, one pupil said that, 'Being inclusive means you should count everyone in and leave nobody out.' Pupils say this happens in school. Pupils cooperate with each other and support one another well. They celebrate each other's successes. They appreciate times for quiet reflection, which promotes their mental well-being well.

Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and follow school rules well. They have good attitudes to learning and behave well. They help others who are less fortunate. For example, they donated harvest festival produce to the local food

bank. However, pupils' understanding of different religions and cultures is less well developed. For example, the school has strong links with its local church, but pupils do not have a wider knowledge of different places of worship.

Children in the early years settle quickly and are happy. Adults care for the children well. The calm and well-ordered environment is bright and stimulating. Children confidently use their early reading, mathematical and creative skills both indoors and outside. Adults are skilful in knowing when to let children follow their interests and when to intervene or ask questions. As a result, children develop a wide vocabulary, make good progress and achieve well. For example, children talked enthusiastically about the design of the shakers they had made. One child put her model to her eye and said it was 'binocular-shaped'.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in all aspects of school life. However, they do not have enough opportunities to use their mathematics and reading skills in problem-solving and writing activities. Consequently, they do not make as much progress as they could.

The interim executive headteacher provides effective leadership. He has addressed the most important concerns quickly and effectively. He has a clear, strategic plan of what staff need to do next. Staff say that leaders consider their well-being, and that workload is manageable. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

Governors have maintained a careful watch on safeguarding and ensure that staff receive the necessary training. However, in other areas of their role, they have not been as effective. The newly appointed chair of the governing body recognises this. They have devised a plan to ensure governors begin to hold the school to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff and governors understand their responsibilities for keeping children safe at school. Staff have regular training so that they know what to do when a pupil may be at risk. They are vigilant and report concerns quickly. The school works well with outside agencies, so pupils receive the support they need. Checks on new staff and their suitability to work with children are thorough. Pupils feel safe. They know there is always someone they can trust with any concerns they may have. Pupils have a good understanding of managing risks and staying safe, for example, when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in other subjects is not as well developed as it is in reading, mathematics, history and art. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they could in these other subjects. Leaders need to build on the work already started

to develop the curriculum further. Leaders need to plan and sequence the curriculum so that pupils know more and remember more over time.

- Pupils with SEND do not have enough practice in applying their knowledge to problem-solving and writing activities. Leaders should build in opportunities for these pupils to recall and use what they know to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Pupils have limited knowledge of different faiths and cultures. As a result, they are unable to discuss confidently and reflect upon views, beliefs and lifestyles that are different to their own. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum helps pupils to develop their understanding of other faiths and cultures.
- In the past year, personnel issues have distracted governors from fulfilling their role effectively. They do not have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's curriculum. Consequently, they are unable to hold school leaders to account. The newly appointed chair of the governing body has clear plans, including training, to develop governors' understanding of their role. Governors need to carry out those plans so they will be better equipped to hold leaders to account for the quality of education in the school.

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	124093
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10201046
Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Amy Cox
Executive Headteacher	Jason Gathercole
Website	www.talbot.staffs.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	6 and 7 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Talbot First School is a small school. There are two classes. The interim executive headteacher joined the school in January 2021.
- The previous headteacher left the school in July 2021.
- Governors have restructured staffing and reduced the number of staff across the federation. In addition to the previous headteacher, three staff left the school in the summer term 2021.
- The school is one of two schools in The Woodlands Federation, along with St Peter's First School, Marchington. The interim executive headteacher leads both schools.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the interim executive headteacher, and the leaders of English and the early years.
- An inspector met with the mathematics leader who is based at the other school in the federation. An inspector also met with the special educational needs coordinator, who works as a consultant to the school.
- The lead inspector met two members of the governing body, including the newly appointed chair. She also spoke to a local authority representative on the telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors checked the school's work to keep pupils safe. The lead inspector looked at policies, procedures and the school's central record of employment checks on adults working in the school, to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Inspectors talked to pupils about safeguarding and behaviour. They spoke to staff to check their knowledge and understanding of what steps they would take if they had a safeguarding concern about a pupil.
- Inspectors examined a range of information about the school, including content on the school's website and curriculum plans. They also checked records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- An inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered 23 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 17 responses to the free-text service.
- Inspectors took account of 7 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Helen Morrison, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Pamela Matty	Ofsted Inspector

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