

Inspection of a good school: Flax Hill Junior Academy

Chestnut Avenue, Gillway, Tamworth, Staffordshire B79 8QZ

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 November 2021

Outcome

Flax Hill Junior Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend their school. They say that they are happy and they feel safe in school because they are well cared for. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Staff integrate the core values of 'ready, respectful and safe' into all aspects of school. Pupils understand the importance of these values.

Staff want all pupils at the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to become well-rounded citizens. Leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum to make sure that it is broad and balanced.

Pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school. They behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. Pupils live up to the high expectations that staff have for them.

Pupils know how to stay safe, including when online. Pupils say that bullying is very rare, but they trust adults to deal with it if it did happen.

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

All leaders and staff have a clear vision for the school. They want pupils to succeed. Leaders have created a purposeful environment where pupils are keen to learn.

Leaders want every pupil to develop a love of reading. As a result of this, they have put reading at the forefront of the curriculum. Everyone values reading. The school's phonics programme is well planned. All staff have had training in the teaching of phonics so that they can support pupils effectively with their reading. Children love reading. They talk about their favourite books and authors with understanding and pleasure. One child said that, 'Once I start reading a book, I can't put it down. I feel like I am there, and I just enjoy it so much I don't want to stop reading'. This is typical of what pupils say about reading.

The music curriculum is a strength of the school. Subject plans are ambitious. Progression in music is carefully considered to produce high-quality musical outcomes. Pupils love music lessons and there is very high demand to join musical clubs. Pupils' behaviour in music lessons is exemplary. In mathematics, pupils start each lesson with an 'Intelligent Maths' session where they focus on number, basic skills and reasoning. This helps staff to check if pupils can remember what they have learned. In many subjects, leaders have planned a curriculum which builds pupils' knowledge and skills well. In some subjects, plans show clearly what vocabulary and concepts children need to know. However, in subjects where this is not the case, it is not as clear how curriculum plans support pupils in building their vocabulary knowledge over time.

Pupils with SEND receive good support. Leaders and staff understand pupils' needs well. Staff receive regular training, including from specialists outside of the school, about how to support pupils with SEND. Pupils engage fully in lessons, and have work and support matched to their needs.

Some aspects of wider development are well developed. The school provides good pastoral support and children know how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Pupils also take part in a range of clubs, including dodgeball, choir and gardening. Pupils have less knowledge of some aspects of the fundamental British values. Leaders have plans to develop this.

Pupils understand why they need to show respect to others. They feel valued and treat each other in the same way.

Governors are passionate about their work and know the school well. Staff are proud to work at the school. They speak highly of the training they receive and of the support from leaders around their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know that adults will help to resolve any issues or worries. Staff ensure that pupils are well looked after and supported. Policies and procedures for safeguarding are clear and well communicated to all staff. Staff receive regular training that ensures they can identify any problems that pupils may face. Safeguarding records are thorough and well maintained. Strong communication ensures that staff share concerns swiftly. Leaders work effectively with pupils and families who need extra help and support.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Plans in some subjects do not identify the specific vocabulary that children need to learn. It is not always clear how pupils will build their vocabulary over time in these

subjects. Leaders should continue to refine curriculum plans, identifying the subject-specific vocabulary that pupils need to know and remember.

- Pupils' knowledge of some aspects of British values is limited, which means that they may be less well prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that pupils develop a better understanding of all aspects of British values.

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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Flax Hill Junior School, to be good in April 2012.

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	140523
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10205149
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	290
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Marion Couchman
Executive Headteacher	Richard Lane
Website	www.flaxhill.staffs.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	10 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. She also met with representatives of the governing body.
- The inspection focused on reading, mathematics and music. The inspector met subject leaders for these subjects and undertook joint visits to lessons. She also talked to pupils and teachers and looked at work.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to curriculum planning and development, safeguarding arrangements, behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector held informal and formal discussions with many pupils and observed playtime and lunchtime.

- The inspector met with parents to gain their views of the school. She reviewed responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and additional free text comments. The inspector also took account of responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Emma Gater, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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