

Inspection of a good school: Fulford Primary School

Fulford Road, Fulford, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST11 9QT

Inspection date: 6 April 2022

Outcome

Fulford Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Fulford Primary School is a warm and friendly school with a family feel. Everyone is welcome. The pupils know and care for each other. Bullying hardly happens. Pupils feel confident that staff will resolve issues if they occur. Pupils feel safe. They say that there are always adults to help them as 'the grown-ups always have an open door.'

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Lessons are calm, and pupils work hard. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. As a result, classrooms are purposeful and productive places. Outside on the playground, behaviour is lively, happy and friendly. Older pupils play nicely with, and help take care of, the younger children.

Pupils are proud of the responsibilities they hold in school, for example house captains and eco captains. Pupils say that some of the activities they did before the COVID-19 pandemic, such as leading house activities, were paused. They are pleased these are starting up again.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. They are well supported by knowledgeable and well-trained staff.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious. For example, leaders have decided to introduce French to pupils in Years 1 and 2. Leaders have thought carefully about how learning progresses from Nursery to Year 6. Leaders have identified what pupils will learn in each subject and have planned learning that builds logically. However, in a few subjects, leaders have not clearly mapped out the precise knowledge that they want the children to learn. This means that, at times, some teachers are not clear about the precise knowledge they want pupils to learn. For example, in art, pupils are taught to practise different drawing techniques, but these are not made explicit.

There is a determination for every child to be able to read. Leaders recognise the importance of reading in ensuring pupils' future learning and well-being. As a result, reading is a priority in the school. Leaders carefully consider the books, poems and authors that they want the pupils to know and love. Pupils are proud of being able to know and recite poetry by heart.

The school's phonics programme is well planned and helps children make a quick start learning to read. Staff are well trained and regularly check what the children can remember. Books are well matched to the letter sounds pupils know. Pupils develop a love of stories and poems and talk confidently about the stories they like.

Mathematics is taught well across the school. The mathematics leader has ensured all staff are confident in planning and delivering a well sequenced curriculum. Staff use careful questioning to check if pupils remember their learning.

Children in early years build strong relationships with staff. This helps them to be ready to learn. Children learn about number through stories and rhymes. Learning is consolidated throughout the day. For example, children made a tally chart representing which story they wanted to read in story time.

Pupils are responsible and understand the importance of treating everyone with respect. Leaders are committed to developing the pupils' broader understanding of the wider world. Leaders have begun to identify key texts and learning opportunities that promote diversity, so pupils develop a deeper understanding about other faiths, cultures and beliefs. However, this is not yet embedded in the school's curriculum. This means that some pupils have a limited knowledge of diversity in modern Britain.

Leaders are considerate of staff and their workload. They take workload and well-being into account before implementing new initiatives. Staff get the time they need to carry out additional responsibilities. They are proud to work at the school.

Parents are very positive about the school. They recognise the family feel and the care their children get. A typical parental comment is, 'This is a lovely village school with a supportive, hands-on headteacher who is a very visible presence. The teachers are kind, caring and supportive.'

Pupils appreciate the additional learning opportunities they get to experience throughout their time in school. For example, pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 learn woodwind and brass instruments.

Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priority areas. They work closely with other schools and organisations to access training and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know the pupils and their families well. They use this knowledge to build effective relationships that help identify concerns. Pupils are supported through the 'helping our pupils' emotions' (HOPE) project. Families and pupils refer themselves to trained individuals in school. This has ensured families get the support they need quickly. Although there are very few safeguarding concerns, leaders are not complacent. They ensure that all staff are well trained to spot signs of neglect and abuse.

Leaders ensure the appropriate checks on staff are undertaken before they are appointed. Pupils learn about road safety, online safety and keeping themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a very small number of foundation subjects, leaders have not identified the precise subject-specific knowledge that they want pupils to learn. This means that, although pupils achieve well, they do not remember the precise knowledge that leaders want them to. Leaders should make sure that they identify the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn in these subjects from early years to Year 6.
- Some pupils do not have a detailed enough understanding of diversity in modern Britain. For example, pupils have limited understanding of cultures and families that are different from their own. Leaders should make sure that the curriculum contains explicit opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of diversity. This will better prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

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 school to be good in December 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	124085
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10212461
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	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew McFarlane
Headteacher	Helen Sutton
Website	www.fulfordprimary.net
Date of previous inspection	2 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs its own after-school club.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and other subject leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and checked safeguarding documents, including the checks made on staff. They also examined documentation relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the views of staff recorded in Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors spoke with those responsible for governance, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Eve Morris, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Deborah Campbell

Ofsted Inspector

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