

Inspection of a good school: Gladstone Primary Academy

Anchor Road, Sandford Hill, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 5EW

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 May 2022

Outcome

Gladstone Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Gladstone Primary Academy is a caring, nurturing school. Pupils are happy and safe. They follow the school motto: 'We are all equally different'. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils are confident that staff will resolve any issues or concerns they have.

Leaders make sure that learning is carefully structured so that pupils achieve well academically and develop personally. Pupils enjoy reading books and listening to their teachers read stories. Pupils develop their wider interests and grow in confidence through a range of enrichment activities, such as visitors to school, trips and residential stays. They learn new skills during workshops about the Romans, the Greeks and dinosaurs. Year 4 pupils recently enjoyed a trip to the local outdoor adventure centre, Stanley Head.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils listen carefully and are fully engaged in their learning. During playtimes and lunchtimes, they play well together outdoors. One parent's comment was typical of many when they said, 'Gladstone is a fantastic school and I know that my child is happy there.'

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

Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum for pupils. In most subjects, the curriculum is carefully sequenced and implemented. This ensures that pupils build up knowledge over time. Curriculum leaders ensure that teachers have the subject knowledge they need to teach most subjects well. However, in some subjects, including computing, design and technology and physical education (PE), this work to ensure the curriculum's effectiveness has been delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders have appropriate plans to address this.

The mathematics curriculum is well planned and taught across the school. Pupils enjoy mathematics. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. They make

regular checks on pupils' learning during lessons. Teachers recap prior learning to help pupils remember things they have learned before. They plan next steps carefully, to meet pupils' needs based on what pupils know and can do already. As a result, pupils do well.

Leaders prioritise reading. Pupils like reading. They read to adults regularly in school and at home. Older pupils enjoy reading books by favourite authors, such as 'Arthur, High King of Britain' by Michael Morpurgo. Recent improvements to the teaching of early reading are effective. In the main, pupils receive good support from well-trained adults. However, a few staff need further training to improve their knowledge to teach phonics well. For a few pupils who are catching up in their learning following the COVID-19 pandemic, some books do not closely match the sounds they are learning. Leaders are aware and are taking action to address this.

Good communication between home and school helps children in the early years settle well into school life. Routines are well established and children develop positive attitudes to learning. Staff plan learning carefully, based on what children know and can do. Children learn about numbers through practical activities, songs and rhymes. Children practise new learning when working independently. This helps them to know and remember more.

Teachers carefully adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The 'Den' provides effective support for pupils who find school life difficult. Leaders have identified specific needs and gaps in learning for pupils who have fallen behind following the pandemic but have not yet put in place fully their intended actions to help pupils to catch up.

Leaders provide a well-sequenced personal development curriculum. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of positive and respectful healthy relationships. Opportunities such as school councillors and junior police cadets allow pupils to take on responsibilities in school. In doing so, they develop confidence and communication skills. Strong pastoral support means pupils get the help and advice they need. The school rules help pupils to understand right and wrong and how to keep themselves and others safe. Opportunities to learn about other cultures and religions help pupils to respect others' differences.

Senior leaders and trust members have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They want all pupils to have the best possible start in life. Some leaders new to subject leadership need further support to fulfil their roles. Staff feel supported by leaders, who manage their workload effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' welfare is prioritised. Leaders ensure that staff attend regular safeguarding training. Staff record and report concerns swiftly. These include child sexual harassment,

domestic abuse and neglect. Leaders secure help for those pupils who need it. They work in partnership with external agencies as required.

Pupils know how to raise concerns with trusted adults in school. They learn about healthy relationships and online safety.

Leaders undertake the necessary safeguarding checks before staff work at Gladstone Primary Academy.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have recently revised the curriculum in PE, design and technology and computing. However, they have not yet evaluated the impact that the new curriculum is having on what pupils know and remember. Leaders should implement their plans to support subject leaders to monitor these subjects and develop staff's subject knowledge in the foundation subjects, particularly PE, design and technology and computing.
- For a few pupils who have fallen behind in their reading, books do not consistently match the sounds they are learning. This hampers their progress to catch up. Leaders should ensure that books are well matched to the sounds that pupils are learning. They should monitor the impact of this work closely, so that these pupils quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident, fluent readers.
- Some younger pupils who have fallen behind due to the COVID-19 pandemic cannot keep up with their peers because they do not have all the support they need. Leaders should accelerate their plans to ensure that pupils who have fallen behind receive the focused support they need to catch up quickly.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Gladstone Primary School, to be good in March 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 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	142991
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10212176
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	465
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Guy Weir
Headteacher	Elaine Preston
Website	www.gladstoneprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provision provider.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and PE. This included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, examining curriculum documents and talking with pupils and staff. The inspector also looked at work from a sample of other subjects.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and reviewed reading resources.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation on the school's website as part of the preparatory work.
- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding arrangements. This included examining the record of employment checks on school staff.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times during the day.

- During the inspection, the inspector had formal meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (who is also the assistant headteacher), the designated safeguarding lead, governors and trust representatives.
- The inspector took account of responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, the pupil survey and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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