

Inspection of a good school: Grange School

Shobnall Close, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE14 2HU

Inspection date: 14 July 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including those in the early years, enjoy school. They told inspectors that they are happy and feel safe. They trust staff to take care of them and to listen carefully if they have problems. They say that bullying hardly ever happens. When it does, staff deal with it quickly and help pupils to understand why it happened and how to put things right.

Many pupils need help with communication and language when they arrive at the school. Leaders make sure that the right help is put in place quickly. They check that support is working well and helping pupils to make progress.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The school values of 'ready, respectful and safe' are thoroughly understood by all pupils. They are keen to demonstrate how they meet the values and the rewards they have received for doing so. Pupils are kind and considerate towards each other.

Leaders have placed a strong focus on helping children to develop their knowledge and experience of the world around them so that they know what they can aspire to. This is supported by a broad range of trips and visitors to school.

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

Leaders have made sure that the curriculum is designed to be ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have given a lot of time and thought to improving how children are taught to read. A new phonics programme has been introduced this year. It is already having a significant and positive impact on the progress pupils are making from early years onwards. Pre-school children are now well prepared for their Reception Year. Children in the provision for two-year-olds are also benefiting from an early introduction to letters and their sounds.

Teachers have good subject knowledge across most areas of the curriculum. However, teachers' delivery of the curriculum is less well developed. In some subjects, some pupils struggle to understand and remember their learning. When this happens, teachers are not always confident enough to adapt how they teach what they want pupils to know. As a result, pupils do not always make the progress they should.

Leaders have ensured that frequent checks on pupils' understanding are part of every lesson. Formal assessment is regular and is used effectively to identify pupils who need more help. Consequently, teachers have lots of information to help them plan lessons that take pupils' needs into account.

Pupils with SEND are well supported from the moment they join the school. This is because leaders are alert to difficulties and have the expertise to identify where these pupils may need additional help. They know that the earlier a need is identified and supported, the less impact it will have on a pupil's progress.

All pupils, including those in the early years, enjoy learning to read. They talk with enthusiasm about the successes they have. They quickly develop a love of reading because it is part of the fabric of the school day. Daily story time is popular. Pupils talk about teachers using their 'reading voices' to bring the stories and characters to life for them.

Pupils understand fundamental British values. They place high value on being respectful and tolerant of one another in school and out. They have many opportunities to learn about each other's faiths and beliefs and enjoy doing so. Leaders make sure that pupils benefit from a range of experiences that help them to understand the wider world and discover new interests. Activities include visits to farms and adventure parks. The school also hosts an annual 'seaside day' and has visits from theatre groups, authors, poets and sports professionals. These experiences add to pupils' enjoyment of school and promote their personal development.

Leaders know that pupils' attendance is not good enough. Too many pupils are absent too often. Since the pandemic, leaders have increased their efforts to address the problem. However, there is not a systematic approach to deal with the root causes of absence. As a result, actions taken are not leading to significant improvement.

Teachers are proud to work at this school. They say that school and trust leaders take their well-being and workload into account and offer support when needed. They describe the staff as a 'family' who help and support each other. As a result, morale is high.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that improving how staff deliver the curriculum and pupils' attendance may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a priority in the school. Staff are well trained and effective systems are in place to make sure all concerns are recorded, no matter how slight. Leaders quickly identify pupils who need early help or who are at risk of harm and take rapid action. Leaders have developed very effective working relationships with external partners and agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the help they need.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

Leaders have received training in safer recruitment and make sure that all appropriate checks are completed and recorded.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' pedagogical knowledge is not always developed well enough. As a result, some pupils struggle to remember what they have learned and so have difficulty building on that learning. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and expertise to deliver the curriculum effectively.
- Attendance and persistent absence are not improving as rapidly as they should. Too many pupils are absent too often. This is having a negative impact on the learning of some of the school's most vulnerable pupils. Leaders should ensure that parents and other stakeholders are fully involved in a systematic plan to secure the improvements needed.

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, Grange Infant School, to be good in July 2015.

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	145377
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10227739
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Phil Pusey
Headteacher	Joanne Lewis
Website	https://www.grangeschool.academy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Grange School converted to become an academy in March 2018. When its predecessor school, Grange Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Grange School is a converter academy within the Central Co-operative Learning Trust.
- Grange School offers provision for two-year-olds.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider for part-time placements.

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.
- During this inspection, an acting headteacher was in place.
- Inspectors met with the acting headteacher, senior leaders, the chair of the local governing board, the chief executive officer of the trust, teachers, parents and pupils.
- Deep dives in reading, mathematics and science were carried out. These included discussions with subject leaders and teachers, visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils'

work. The inspectors also met with pupils to discuss their learning in these subjects and listened to pupils read.

- Inspectors also spoke with leaders about the wider development of pupils, their plans for further development of the curriculum and the provision for two-year-olds started this year.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including leaders' plans to improve the school, their self-evaluation of the school's work, curriculum plans and the school website. Minutes of governors' meetings and the trust's scheme of delegation were also reviewed.
- Inspectors also reviewed and discussed records of attendance.
- When inspecting safeguarding, the inspector considered the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe, the checks made to ensure safer recruitment and the quality of staff training.
- The inspectors spoke to parents at the end of the first day of the inspection. Inspectors considered 19 responses, including the free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The inspectors considered 14 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Mel Ford, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janet Satchwell

Ofsted Inspector

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