

Inspection of a good school: Hazel Slade Primary Academy

Cannock Wood Street, Hazel Slade, Cannock, Staffordshire WS12 0PN

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 2022

Outcome

Hazel Slade Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and children in early years, feel happy and safe at school. They say that there is very little bullying and that when it does happen, staff deal with it quickly. They are adamant that bullying is not tolerated.

Pupils enjoy their learning. They say that teachers care about them and want to help them to do well. They know what they are expected to achieve and try hard to do so. They are well supported to develop into resilient learners, who can use mistakes to learn more. Those who need extra help are identified quickly and given the right support.

The vast majority of pupils behave well. They know and understand the high expectations that leaders have of their behaviour. Those who sometimes struggle with their emotions are well supported so that the learning of others is not disrupted. They told the inspector that staff help them to find ways to manage their feelings better.

Leaders ensure that pupils start to develop their experience and understanding of the world around them as soon as they join the school. The wide range of clubs, and the nurture groups, visitors to school and trips provided are thoroughly enjoyed by pupils. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

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

Leaders have undertaken a rigorous review of the school's curriculum. They have been well supported by the multi-academy trust in doing so. The changes made have given pupils even more opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in all subjects. The sequence of learning is carefully planned to help pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to build their learning over time to achieve ambitious targets. In a few cases, implementation of the new subject curriculums has begun this term. Rightly, leaders have scheduled frequent checks to ensure that the planned sequence of learning always works well for pupils.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and are well supported by appropriate resources. However, occasionally, activities given to pupils are not well suited to achieve the intended learning. Also, teachers do not always have the confidence to adapt pupils' learning quickly enough. When this happens, pupils struggle to understand what they need to do and what they are learning.

Phonics is taught from the beginning of Reception. In Nursery, children start learning about environmental sounds in preparation for more formal learning. A new phonics programme has been introduced this year. Teachers have very rapidly established the required routines. These enable them to identify children needing extra help more easily and to intervene quickly. Children enjoy their learning in phonics and achieve well.

Reading is at the heart of everything in the school. Pupils enjoy reading to adults and adults reading to them. They are proud of how often they read independently and of how many books they have read. Leaders make sure that every child has the opportunity to learn to read and to love to read. Books are everywhere, not just in classrooms but also in corridors. Many pupils choose to spend breaktime choosing new books.

Leaders ensure that all teachers check pupils' understanding in every lesson. Regular, formal assessment pinpoints where pupils may need more targeted help. Teachers are effectively supported by well-trained teaching assistants to provide extra support to pupils, where it is needed.

Pupils with SEND are rapidly identified when they join the school. Leaders always take action. They have worked hard to ensure that parents and carers are fully involved in decision-making. Supported by the multi-academy trust, leaders have invested time and money in specialist staff training so that pupils have access to speech and language support when they need it, not just when it is available externally. Additional programmes have been put in place to offer a range of approaches to support pupils' educational and emotional needs. These have had a very positive impact.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn about differences, respect and tolerance. They learn to be kind to each other and are proud to be so. Pupils are encouraged to always try their best and are helped to become resilient learners, to think carefully and to have integrity.

Leaders are aware that pupils' absence is too high. They have worked hard to increase the attendance of these pupils and have achieved some real improvements. However, it remains the case that too many pupils are absent too often.

Staff morale is high. This is because leaders are supportive of staff well-being and of their work-life balance. Staff say that leaders have an 'open-door' policy and that if they need help, they can ask for it.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. It is seen as the thread that runs through all of leaders' work, with rigorous oversight by the trust.

Staff are well trained. They know what to do if they have concerns, and the recording of incidents is meticulous. As a result, children needing help are identified rapidly. Leaders work with parents and external agencies effectively to ensure that the right help is provided at the right time.

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)

- Too many pupils are persistently absent, despite recent improvement. As a result, some of the most vulnerable children do not access the education and care they should. Leaders should ensure that all possible avenues are explored and exploited to secure the regular attendance of these pupils.
- Occasionally, teachers lack the pedagogical knowledge and expertise to ensure that learning is presented in the most effective way. In these instances, pupils do not learn as well or as much as they should. Leaders should ensure that all staff develop the appropriate level of expertise.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Hazel Slade Community Primary School, to be good in October 2014.

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.

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	145684
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10241466
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Johnny Anderson
Principal	Sarah Camacho
Website	www.hazelsladeprimaryacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Hazel Slade Community Primary School converted to become an academy in June 2018. When this predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Hazel Slade Primary Academy is a converter academy in The St Bart's Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school has before- and after-school childcare.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the principal, vice-principal, curriculum leaders, the chair of the local governing committee, governors, the chief executive officer of the trust, trustees, teachers, parents and pupils.

- Deep dives in reading, mathematics and geography were carried out. These included discussions with subject leaders and teachers, visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work. The inspector also met with pupils to discuss their learning in these subjects and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors spoke with leaders about the wider development of pupils, and their rationale for the recent further development of the curriculum.
- 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 reviewed on the website.
- The inspector 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 inspector spoke to parents at the end of the first day of the inspection. She considered 66 responses, including the free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View. The inspector considered 18 responses to the staff survey and 87 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Mel Ford, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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