

Inspection of a good school: The Fountains Primary School

Bitham Lane, Stretton, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE13 0HB

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2022

Outcome

The Fountains Primary School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The Fountains Primary School is a warm and welcoming place. Staff take good care of the pupils. Pupils are happy. One comment made by a parent about their child is shared by many others, 'He's coming home with a smile on his face. He loves going to school.'

Staff support pupils well in how to manage their emotions and behaviour. If pupils become upset, staff are quick to help them to resettle to their learning. As a result, little learning time is lost. Pupils are not worried about bullying. Leaders respond to any reported incidences of bullying and act when needed.

The school's motto, 'Always achieving our potential', is reflected in the high aspirations leaders have of the pupils. From an early age, pupils learn about different careers. Visitors, including a postal worker and dog groomer, come into school to talk to pupils about their jobs.

Leaders prepare pupils well for the future. They teach pupils how to be responsible, active citizens by giving them roles and responsibilities such as being a member of the school council or the eco committee. Leaders develop pupils' confidence and independence by taking them into the local community; visits include the zoo and the café at the high school.

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

There is a strong sense of teamwork within the school and trust. Leaders and staff at all levels share a common purpose. That is to continually improve the school and ensure every child meets with success. This vision is realised.

Leaders think carefully about the precise knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn. They reviewed the curriculum two years ago and increased the number of pathways for pupils. Thus, pupils follow a curriculum that is bespoke to their needs. Leaders are highly ambitious about what pupils can achieve. They ensure that pupils develop the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the future. This includes teaching them to be independent.

Sequences of learning are well planned. Pupils revisit and repeat essential learning. This means that learning sticks. Pupils talk with confidence about what they have learned in lessons.

Staff use a range of assessments well to identify any gaps in pupils' learning. This includes checking, in every subject, the progress pupils are making towards the targets in their education, health and care plans. Pupils make good progress towards their outcomes.

Leaders understand the importance of pupils being able to read. Staff are well trained and supported by leaders to deliver an effective reading programme. This starts in early years. Leaders support parents and carers to help their children read by hosting parent forums. Parents value this support. Leaders regularly check how well pupils are learning to read. Most develop into confident, fluent readers. If pupils fall behind, leaders provide pupils with effective extra help.

Developing pupils' communication skills is a strength of the school. Staff use appropriate resources well. These include the use of a range of communication aids that closely match pupils' needs. Leaders work closely with external agencies to support staff in how to meet pupils' additional needs. For example, leaders have recently improved the information provided in pupils' communication passports. However, these are not yet fully embedded across the school.

The use of 'zones of regulation' is helping pupils to manage their own emotions and behaviour. All staff use a common language to help pupils understand how they are feeling. This starts as soon as pupils join the school. Pupils become increasingly confident in using this language to describe how they are feeling. This in turn helps staff to identify the best way to support them. Typically, lessons run smoothly.

Leaders support pupils to develop in many diverse aspects of life. Pupils raise money for charities including 'Jeans for Genes Day'. This helps pupils celebrate difference. Leaders plan memorable moments for pupils. This may be a visit to a climbing wall as part of pupils' topic work about 'super heroes' or a visit to the local library to choose a book to read. Parents say these experiences are helping their children become better prepared for the future.

The trust takes staff's workload and well-being seriously. Staff value the many opportunities the trust provides for their career development. They speak positively about the support leaders give them. This includes staff who are at an early stage in their career. Consequently, staff say they enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff take pupils' welfare seriously. They report any concerns quickly so that appropriate action can be taken. Leaders make sure staff have regular updates and training. Effective use is made of support from external agencies. This means families get the right support when they need it.

Leaders make sure pupils know how to keep themselves safe through lessons and assemblies. This includes e-safety. Pupils have their own internet committee. Pupils can go to committee members and raise concerns or ask for advice. As a result, pupils know what to do if they see something that makes them feel uncomfortable on a computer.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Until recently, the information provided in pupils' communication passports was not precise enough for staff to know how to fully meet individual pupils' needs. This limited pupils' progress. Leaders have recently updated and refined the passports to ensure that the information provided in them is more precise in how to meet pupils' communication needs. Leaders need to embed their use across the school and evaluate their impact on pupils' development and progress.

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, The Fountains Primary School, to be good in February 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.

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	146071
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10241610
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Emily
Headteacher	Nicola Price
Website	www.fountainsprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- When the school converted to an academy in August 2018, the head of school became the headteacher. In September 2022, the school also appointed a new deputy headteacher and two assistant headteachers.
- All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is part of the Esteem Multi-Academy Trust. There are 11 schools in the trust.
- The school has provision for three-year-olds.
- The school has a breakfast club and an after-school club operating on the site. This provision is managed by the school.
- 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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders, members of the local governing body (LGB), the chair of the LGB, the acting director of education of the trust, the chief executive officer, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also spoke on the telephone to the chair of trustees and a trustee.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, the 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.
- The lead inspector also looked at pupils' work in other subjects.
- The lead inspector talked to pupils and staff at unstructured times during the day.
- The lead inspector talked to parents and drivers at the school gate.
- The inspectors evaluated a range of school documents and looked at information on the school's website.
- The lead inspector checked the single central record and met with the school's safeguarding leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil survey and considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

Lesley Yates, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Nicola Harwood

Ofsted Inspector

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