

Inspection of a good school: Coupals Primary Academy

Chalkstone Way, Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 0LB

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 January 2023

Outcome

Coupals Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Coupals Primary Academy pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They enjoy speaking about their learning, especially about the books they read with adults in the school. Classrooms are lively and interesting places in which to learn. New pupils are helped to settle in quickly. Children in the early years are taught the sounds that letters make from the outset. They get lots of practice, which builds their confidence as they begin to read and spell new words.

Most pupils get on well together. Occasional fallings-out are sorted out quickly. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils trust school staff to help them if they have a problem. They can explain the importance of the school's 'golden rules', which are proving successful in addressing a previous increase in some less positive behaviour. The few pupils who sometimes misbehave are helped to improve.

Pupils value opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as acting as 'eco leaders' or being voted in as members of the school's council. They like to get involved in charity events and to join after-school clubs. The residential trip for Year 6 pupils is returning this year, focusing on improving independence in preparation for moving on to secondary education.

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

The trust acted swiftly to address leadership changes. The executive headteacher and the head of school were appointed from another school in the trust. Working closely together, they have settled into their new roles quickly, winning the confidence and support of pupils, most staff and many parents.

Pupils experience a carefully thought-out curriculum. The content is taught in the most logical order and so that pupils have opportunities to revisit previous learning regularly. This means that they remember more and can apply what they know to new learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported to access

the same curriculum as other pupils. Guidance from the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) helps teachers to adapt learning to meet different needs. Regular checks on learning mean that staff know what pupils need to do to continue to improve.

Ensuring that all pupils learn to read well is prioritised. Many staff have had extensive training to teach early reading and in supporting older pupils to catch up. In the early years, books are closely matched to the sounds that children are learning. Children enjoy practising their sounds every day.

Pupils have access to a range of interesting and high-quality texts. The books they read in English are appropriately linked to content in other subjects. This helps pupils to make connections, so that they deepen their learning and can apply it to new ideas. Year 6 pupils spoke confidently, for example, about previous work in science which helps them with their class text, 'Pig-Heart Boy'.

While effectively implemented overall, the curriculum is not as consistently well defined in a few subjects, including in the early years. The development of the curriculum leadership team is an ongoing priority. A few subject leads are new to the role. Leaders are ensuring that they are trained effectively to evaluate precisely the quality of the provision in their areas of responsibility, including for pupils with SEND.

While most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, a few find it harder to settle into routines. Where this happens, pupils are supported to improve. Recent changes to the behaviour policy have helped to reset the boundaries of adults' expectations of all pupils. Raised expectations are securing greater consistency in managing any behaviour which falls short of expected standards. Staff work closely with families to ensure that all pupils attend school as regularly as they should.

Pupils' personal development is well promoted. They enjoy joining in with activities, such as festival days in celebration of food and art. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and know what it means to live in a democratic society. The personal, social and health education curriculum teaches them about positive relationships and the importance of leading healthy lifestyles. Older pupils speak with confidence about basic human rights and about why, for example, racism should never be tolerated. Links with secondary schools ensure that pupils are well supported to make a smooth transition to the next stage of their education.

The trust provides a range of opportunities for professional development, including for governors and new curriculum leaders. Senior leaders have an accurate view of what is going well and what needs to improve. Leaders, including governors and the trust, take account of staff's workload and well-being when making changes to develop the quality of provision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are vigilant and well trained. They report any concerns quickly so that vulnerable pupils get the help they need. The school's welfare team, including the family support officer and the emotional literacy support assistant, contribute effectively alongside the support from external agencies and health professionals. Leaders ensure that all the required safeguarding checks are made on new staff before they join the school.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe and to make the right choices, including using the internet safely. Local and national safeguarding concerns are considered in an age-appropriate way.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum leadership team is still developing. Some subject leaders are new to their roles. This means that capacity to consolidate and build on curriculum improvements is still being established. New leaders should be supported to complete any further training needed quickly, so that monitoring and review processes are precise in identifying the detail of what is working well and what needs to improve further.
- The school's revised behaviour policy is in the early stages of implementation. Consequently, a few pupils do not live up to the high standards promoted. Leaders should ensure that all staff are clear about their expectations and that the interventions in place are making a difference for those pupils whose behaviour needs to improve.

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 school to be good in September 2017.

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	141371
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10255234
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	332
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christine Quinn
Executive headteacher	Jane Sendall
Website	www.coupalsacademy.co.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Unity Schools Partnership multi-academy trust. At the time of the previous inspection, the trust was known as The Samuel Ward Academy Trust.
- The school's executive headteacher and head of school were recently appointed from another school in the trust.
- A higher proportion of pupils enter the school at different points and at different stages of their education than was previously the case.
- The numbers of pupils with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language are increasing.
- The school does not currently use any alternative education providers.

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 conducted deep dives in the following subjects: English, early reading, mathematics and geography.
- For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with school-based and trust subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons jointly with leaders and spoke with teachers and other adults. She also spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector checked safeguarding policies, the school's record of pre-employment checks on new staff and a sample of child protection files. She also spoke with representatives from the trust, including the chief executive officer, governors, leaders, including the designated safeguarding leads, and other staff about safeguarding practices at the school.
- Additional meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the SENCo and specialist leaders from the trust.
- A range of documents were checked, including behaviour logs, attendance records and school policies.
- There were 58 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, which were considered alongside 58 free-text responses from parents. The inspector also spoke with some parents as they dropped their children off at the school.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school pupils. The inspector spoke with individuals and groups of pupils during the inspection to hear about their school experiences.
- There were 28 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff. These were considered alongside the inspector's discussions with staff throughout the inspection to gather their views.

Inspection team

Christine Dick, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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