

Inspection of a good school: Coppice Academy

Abbots Way, Westlands, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 2EY

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 January 2023

Outcome

Coppice Academy 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?

Coppice Academy is an inspiring place for pupils to learn. Pupils love coming to this school. They recognise the positive difference it has made to their lives. For example, some pupils say that they have made friends for the first time. Many parents and carers told inspectors how much life has improved because staff understand their children's special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils feel safe in school. They follow the school rules and behave in an exemplary way. Pupils are kind and respectful towards each other and are ready to learn. Bullying rarely happens in school but, if it did, pupils are adamant that staff would resolve it quickly.

Pupils study a broad and balanced range of subjects. Staff know their pupils extremely well. Leaders identify the support pupils need and ensure that they get the right help when they need it. For example, the school employs a councillor to support pupils' emotional needs.

Pupils are not worried if they make mistakes in their work because staff help them to see how they can improve. As a result, pupils make rapid progress, both academically and socially. The school prepares pupils exceptionally well for their next stage in education.

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

The school is exceptionally well led and managed by school leaders and the trust. They ensure, through rigorous quality assurance processes, that the school's curriculum is delivered very effectively.

Leaders have meticulously planned a curriculum that is logically sequenced and builds knowledge over time. The curriculum enables pupils with SEND to learn the knowledge

and skills they need to access one of three accreditation routes. Staff use assessment strategies effectively to pinpoint gaps and ensure that pupils get the right support.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and an excellent understanding of the school's curriculum. They expertly plan lessons that build on pupils' prior knowledge and skills. Teachers know the importance of helping pupils to remember learning long term. They plan lots of opportunities in lessons for pupils to recall previous learning and to apply their knowledge to new tasks. As a result, pupils remember more over time and are proud of their work. Pupils consistently achieve the aims of the curriculum.

Teaching assistants play an important part in helping to deliver the curriculum. They provide effective support for pupils and consistently encourage pupils to be independent. Teaching assistants are confident to 'hold back' while pupils 'have a go'.

Reading is a high priority at this school. Staff provide expert support to those pupils who are at the early stages of reading. All teachers know the reading ages of pupils. They take every opportunity to develop reading skills in all lessons. There is an extensive online library that pupils love. As a result, pupils often make exceptional progress in their reading.

Pupils receive a well-planned careers education programme. This helps them make informed choices about the future. Careers guidance begins in lessons. Teachers link learning in lessons with the knowledge needed in some careers. Many employers and colleges visit the school to talk to pupils.

Leaders take every opportunity to promote pupils' personal development. They plan a wide range of experiences. For example, the school provides a wide range of lunchtime clubs to develop pupils' interests and hobbies. Leaders consistently help pupils to prepare for life in modern Britain. Pupils have a secure understanding of what fundamental British values mean. For example, they learn tolerance and the rights of themselves and others. Pupils also develop an understanding of different faiths and cultures.

Pupils have highly positive attitudes and commitment to their education. They are persistent and do not give up, even if they find work hard. They speak animatedly about the rewards system. They know what they need to do to achieve the rewards they aim for during the school's enrichment afternoon. Pupils particularly enjoy the cooking and sailing rewards.

Staff say that leaders encourage and support them in their work. They report that leaders are mindful of their welfare and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils' safety and well-being are at the heart of everything they do. Leaders make appropriate checks on staff who work with pupils. Through the well-planned curriculum, staff teach pupils about how to keep themselves safe.

Safeguarding training is carefully planned and happens regularly. Staff have an excellent understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They are vigilant and spot any changes in pupils that might alert them to a concern.

Leaders work closely with parents and other agencies to assess perceived needs. They agree on actions that they will take. The designated safeguarding lead keeps meticulous records of all safeguarding concerns.

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 second 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	141449
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10257032
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	98
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Meehan
Principal	Diane Ahearn
Website	www.coppiceacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Coppice Academy is a special school for pupils with SEND who are aged 11 to 16 years.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with a representative from the Shaw Education Trust, the headteacher, the SEND coordinator, curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils.
- The lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website and additional documents provided by leaders during the inspection.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. Pupils' case files were reviewed. The single central record of checks on staff's suitability to work with children was scrutinised.
- Inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and the support they receive to carry out their roles.
- Inspectors examined behaviour support plans and incident records. They observed pupils at different times of the day to evaluate pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Amanda Green, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sarahjane Cuncannon Edwards

Ofsted Inspector

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