

Inspection of a good school: Sutherland Primary Academy

Beaconsfield Drive, Blurton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 3DY

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 February 2023

Outcome

Sutherland Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Sutherland Primary Academy live and learn through the school's 'golden rules' and their 'chance to change' reflective approach to behaviour. They rise to the high expectations set through these, with one pupil saying, 'They help us to be mature. These are life skills; life would not be easy without them'.

At the heart of the school is pupils' safety and well-being. They have every confidence in adults to look after and care for them. Bullying does not happen often because staff help pupils to be kind to each other. If it does, staff deal with it swiftly. Pupils behave well and love to earn 'Pippa points' for their class to have the school's dog in lessons.

Opportunities in the wider curriculum help to develop pupils' character. For example, being an academy ambassador enables pupils to contribute to their school community. Events such as a visit from a rugby union team ensure they also engage with wider society. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular clubs such as book, sports and gardening clubs.

Leaders are acutely aware of issues in the local area and are determined for pupils to be aspirational, which they are. Parents agree, with one saying, 'We are all on the same page'.

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

Leaders, including trustees, are ambitious for all pupils to achieve both academically and personally. They offer a broad and balanced curriculum with a wealth of opportunities for pupils' wider development. A focus on the performing arts gives pupils experiences they enjoy. For example, the links that leaders have made with a local theatre.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive bespoke support. The inclusion team provides pupils with specific, and sometimes complex SEND, a

curriculum that meets their needs. Leaders work closely with a range of agencies to make accurate assessments of pupils with SEND and to advise on how to adapt teaching. This enables these pupils to access appropriate learning and make progress.

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum. They have considered what pupils will learn and when they will learn it in each subject. This is also the case in the early years. In many subjects, this enables pupils to learn what is most important. However, in some units of work, the key knowledge that leaders want pupils to know and remember is not as clear. As a result, some pupils struggle to remember what they have learned.

Reading is a high priority across the school. Books are central to the curriculum. This starts in the early years where there is a clear focus on developing children's language and communication. Staff read to children regularly and explore a range of vocabulary. Staff have enhanced their expertise in early reading. The books pupils read are closely matched to the sounds they know. Staff use assessment strategies to identify where there are gaps in pupils' knowledge. They provide extra support to pupils to help them catch up. This has helped many pupils to improve their phonics knowledge.

Teachers use assessment strategies well in other subjects. They regularly check on pupils' learning in lessons and adapt their teaching to respond to any issues. Leaders have provided 'end point' assessments for teachers to use in each subject to check pupils' learning. These then help teachers to plan future learning in the subject.

Leaders place a high priority on enhancing the curriculum to engage pupils and prepare them for later life. There are strong links with many organisations. These include local universities, companies and community organisations, such as local councillors and a national park.

Staff appreciate leaders' support for their mental health and well-being. While leaders set high expectations, they also provide staff with the support and care they need to carry out their roles. Leaders regularly check on staff and give them time to work on extra responsibilities if needed. This support helps staff to be effective in their roles and enjoy working at the school. One member of staff said, 'Little things make a difference.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are very aware of the risks pupils face in the local area. This contextual knowledge helps leaders to keep pupils safe. Staff are well trained and act swiftly when they have a concern about a pupil. Trustees regularly check that the processes for keeping children safe are followed rigorously. Leaders engage with external agencies when required to help support pupils and their families.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe both in and out of school as well as online. They understand how to do this, for example staying safe on local roads following road safety awareness training.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subjects do not clearly identify the key knowledge that leaders want pupils to know and remember. As a result, pupils do not know and remember as much as they could. Leaders should ensure that all subject curriculums make clear the important knowledge they want pupils to learn.

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 May 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	138548
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10240339
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	519
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ian Macdonald
Headteacher	Mrs Clare Boast
Website	http://www.sutherlandprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 and 18 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school has a breakfast- and after-school club.

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 school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. He also met four members of the board of trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector viewed a range of safeguarding documentation. He examined checks on safer recruitment and spoke with members of staff to check their safeguarding knowledge.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and physical education. He met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and viewed examples of pupils' work. The inspector also spoke to the subject leaders for art and design, geography, design technology and computing.
- The inspector observed children in the early years and pupils in key stages 1 and 2 read to a trusted adult.
- The inspector spoke with members of staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- The inspector considered the responses, including the free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View. He also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys. He also spoke to parents and carers at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Barry Yeardsley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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