

Inspection of a good school: The William Amory Primary School

Stallington Road, Blythe Bridge, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST11 9PN

Inspection dates:

7 to 8 February 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where all pupils are genuinely welcome. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils say they are happy to come to school and feel safe. They are well cared for. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the work of leaders and staff. They typically describe the staff as approachable and caring.

Leaders ensure that staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Most pupils behave well in lessons and on the playground. When there is occasional low-level disruption, staff give reminders and effective support to pupils who need it. When bullying happens, staff take prompt action to make it stop.

Leaders and governors want pupils to achieve well. However, the curriculum is at an early stage of development in some subjects and the teaching of phonics is not always secure.

Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to develop their interests through extra-curricular clubs. These include rugby, choir, drama and computing. Some pupils attend an engineering club where they learn how to assemble a go-kart and race with it in an annual competition. Pupils readily take on leadership roles such as school councillor, head boy, head girl and prefect.

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

Governors know what the school does well and what it needs to improve on. They are committed to the school and local community and have plans in place to secure improvements. Staff report that they feel well supported in their roles.

Leaders have made sure that pupils study a broad curriculum. However, leaders' efforts to improve and better organise the curriculum are at an early stage. Leaders, in several

subjects, have not identified the important concepts and knowledge pupils need to learn and the order in which this should be taught. In these subjects, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to build on what they have learned previously, and their learning is slowed. Additionally, some subject leaders have not had the opportunity to make checks on their curriculum area to see what is working well and what may need to improve.

The curriculum is well sequenced in some subjects, including mathematics. Some subject leaders have considered what they want pupils to learn and in what order. In these subjects, learning is ordered so that pupils work towards planned outcomes. However, some teachers are unclear about how to make sure that pupils remember the most important knowledge. This hinders how well some pupils achieve.

The phonics curriculum is appropriate and resources are well organised to support learning. However, not all staff have had the necessary training or developed the expertise to implement the phonics curriculum as leaders intend. This means that sometimes staff do not teach phonics with accuracy. This leads to some teachers not addressing pupils' errors quickly enough. Consequently, as pupils progress into Year 3, they sometimes struggle to read unfamiliar words using their knowledge of letter sounds. Therefore, a small number of pupils rely too heavily on adult support to read new words.

Staff in the early years are caring and nurturing. They promote reading well and read stories with enthusiasm. Children are kind to each other. They listen to adults and follow instructions. Leaders have identified that children's speech and language is a barrier to learning and have implemented a speech and language programme to address this need. This is having a positive impact on children's language development.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well cared for and fully included in school life, such as through pupil leadership roles. Pupils with SEND are identified promptly. As a result, many pupils with SEND receive dedicated adult support to help them access the curriculum.

Pupils take part in a range of opportunities to widen their experiences. They have taken part in visits to a farm, music concerts and theatre shows. Some older pupils talked enthusiastically about a recent visit to RAF Cosford as part of a history topic. Children take part in sports competitions and perform musical compositions in assemblies. Staff sensitively teach pupils about historical events, including the Holocaust. Pupils respond to these events in a thoughtful way. Pupils show an awareness of fundamental British values and are developing their understanding of different religions and beliefs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff receive appropriate training to recognise the signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm. There are clear systems for reporting concerns that all staff know, understand and use when necessary. Leaders act swiftly when issues arise. They work closely with families and other agencies to make sure that pupils are safe.

Pupils are taught about first aid and how to stay safe in the local community. They learn about how to stay safe online and are taught a range of strategies to do this.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subjects within the curriculum are not planned carefully. Pupils' learning does not build on the knowledge they have learned before to enable them to know more and remember more over time. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum in all subjects sets out the key knowledge and the order that pupils need to be taught it.
- Some subject leaders have not had the opportunity to make sufficient checks on their curriculum area to discover what expertise staff need to develop. Some staff are unclear about how to make sure that pupils remember the most important knowledge. This hinders how well some pupils achieve in some subjects. Leaders should ensure subject leaders develop teachers' subject expertise effectively.
- Phonics is not always taught with accuracy. As a result, some pupils are not reaching fluency in their reading quickly enough. Leaders should ensure that staff develop expertise in teaching phonics and check how well phonics sessions are delivered to ensure their fidelity to the scheme.

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 January 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	131073
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10256899
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing	Lee Grattage
Headteacher	Bruce Wilken
Website	https://williamamory.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not use any alternative provision for pupils.
- The current headteacher is due to retire at the end of this term. A new headteacher has been recruited by the governing body.

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 reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders and governors, including the chair of the governing body. They also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, spoke to teachers, visited lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of

pupils' work.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, who is the designated safeguarding lead. Pupils' records were reviewed. The single central record of the checks on staff's suitability to work with children was scrutinised.
- The inspector met with staff to discuss their workload and the support they receive to carry out their roles.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about how safe they feel in school and how they learn to keep themselves safe.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Emma Titchener, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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