

# Inspection of a good school: Whitfield Valley Primary Academy

Oxford Road, Fegg Hayes, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST6 6TD

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2023

## Outcome

Whitfield Valley Primary 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?

At Whitfield Valley Primary Academy, leaders aspire for pupils to 'be the best they can be'. Parents agree. The comment of one parent reflects the thoughts of others: 'A lovely and supportive school where my child excels and his personal achievements are celebrated alongside his academic.'

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), respond exceptionally well to the high expectations of leaders and staff for their achievement and behaviour. The school's 'golden rules' are central to school life. Pupils' behaviour in classes and around school is exemplary. Pupils feel safe.

Pupils' learning is made interesting through the use of engaging resources and educational visits. Pupils enjoy school; they flourish as inquisitive and knowledgeable learners.

All pupils attend at least one club, selected from a wide range of choices to interest them. The clubs go beyond the sporting and academic. For example, the 'Young Farmers' club takes care of the ducks and rabbits on the school's farm.

Pupils are polite and respectful. They have many responsibilities in school, such as being pupil voice representatives or buddies in the dining hall. Pupils call this school 'our school' because of these opportunities. They understand what bullying is, but cannot recall it ever happening.

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

Leaders have designed a very ambitious and aspirational curriculum for pupils. The curriculum is extremely well planned and consistently delivered. Pupils remember

important information because teachers make sure they regularly practise and recall it. Pupils gain from the rich opportunities in the curriculum.

Pupils are excited to talk about learning. They are very enthusiastic about the books they read and about how practical the learning is. Subject leaders have identified the most important knowledge that they want pupils to learn and remember over time. Teachers know the curriculum well. This allows pupils to develop a confident grasp of curriculum knowledge and skills. They achieve exceptionally well.

Teachers build pupils' knowledge expertly on what they already know. Children in the early years use resources to help them learn as soon as they start in school. For example, in Nursery, when children were confident reciting numbers up to 5, they made sets using stones and pebbles outside, saying which had 'more' or 'less'. Pupils are keen and eager to share their knowledge. They listen when others speak. In Year 6, pupils were able to draw on their learning in computing over time by creating an educational application, using design skills taught previously.

Teachers make extremely effective use of assessment, both during lessons and over time. They check on pupils' learning and provide strong additional support to those pupils who need it. Pupils with SEND are identified swiftly and supported well to access the same curriculum as other pupils. The resources provided for them help them to learn. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve exceptionally well.

Leaders have ensured that reading is at the heart of the curriculum. It is their top priority. Pupils read daily in school, and are read to every day. Staff receive regular, suitable training, particularly in phonics. The early reading curriculum is a strength. Pupils enjoy reading a variety of books in school and at home. They make good use of the school library. They also learn about a range of different authors, and develop a love of reading.

Pupils in lessons are enthusiastic learners. They listen attentively to teachers, and low-level disruption is very rare. There is a strong sense of community and mutual respect. Teachers help pupils to learn about looking after their mental health, such as the importance of sleep.

Leaders provide a rich set of varied experiences, both to promote pupils' personal development and to develop their learning. Pupils value these. They particularly enjoy the opportunities leaders provide to visit places nationally and internationally, such as a museum in York or a skiing trip to Italy. Pupils are given many opportunities to be aspirational.

Staff are proud to work at Whitfield Valley. They value the training and coaching they receive in the school and through the multi-academy trust. They apply this learning effectively. Staff say that leaders take account of their workload and support their mental well-being, with one member of staff commenting that this is a 'work smart' school.

The multi-academy trust consists of highly effective 'critical friends', who carefully monitor the priorities of the school. The trust brings expertise across the schools together, to

ensure strategic and focused improvement. The head boy and head girl attend trust meetings to represent the views of pupils well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise pupils' welfare. They ensure that staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. This includes coverage of child criminal exploitation. Staff are vigilant. They record and report concerns swiftly. Leaders work in partnership with external agencies as required. They secure help for those pupils who need it.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships, online safety and how to keep safe in the local area, including with regard to road safety. They know how to raise concerns with trusted adults in school.

## **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 January 2018.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141346
<b>Local authority</b>	Stoke-on-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10257025
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	457
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Pauline Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Suzanne Rawlings
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.whitfieldv.org.uk">www.whitfieldv.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Inspirational Learning Academies Trust.
- Leaders make use of one unregistered alternative provider.

## 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 his evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher and the headteacher. He also met six members of the board of directors, including the chair of directors.
- 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 history. He met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and viewed examples of

pupils' work. The inspector also spoke to pupils about science, computing and art and design.

- 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 Yeadsley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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