

Inspection of a good school: Leek First School

East Street, Leek First School, Select, Staffordshire ST13 6LF

Inspection date:

8 March 2023

Outcome

Leek First School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leek First School is a friendly school with a family feel and a strong sense of community. Leaders and staff know pupils extremely well and put them at the heart of every decision. Parents and carers are very positive about the school. They especially value the personalised approach that their children receive. A typical comment sums up the views of many: 'staff bring out the best in the children'.

Leaders and staff have a clear vision for the school. They have high expectations, and pupils meet these expectations to work hard and achieve their best. Pupils display an eagerness to please and a motivation to learn.

Pupils are proud to attend their school, and they feel safe because staff look after them. They say that bullying does sometimes happen, but adults will deal with it.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that enrich the curriculum. These promote pupils' confidence and sense of responsibility. There is a variety of clubs on offer, including cookery, yoga and mindfulness. Pupils can also take on positions of responsibility, such as school librarians or Year 4 monitors. They enjoy these roles and take their responsibilities seriously.

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

All leaders and staff have a clear vision for the school. They are ambitious for pupils and have created a purposeful learning environment. Every staff member helps pupils to achieve their best. They ensure that pupils feel motivated and engage well in learning.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, ensuring that pupils are well prepared for their next steps. In the core subjects, leaders have broken down the important knowledge that

pupils need to acquire over time into smaller steps. They have also identified the order in which they want pupils to learn this so that they can revisit key concepts. This helps to deepen pupils' knowledge over time. However, in some foundation subjects, leaders have not provided staff with enough information about the smaller components of knowledge that they want pupils to learn. This makes it difficult for staff to make sure that pupils are learning and remembering everything they need to know.

Children get off to a good start to life in school. In early years, daily phonics sessions help them to learn their sounds quickly. Leaders promote a love of reading with the mantra of, 'everyone a reader and reading everywhere'. Leaders have carefully selected high-quality texts for teachers to use in lessons. This ensures that teachers expose pupils to a wide range of text types and authors during their time at school. There is a structured approach to reading across the school. Staff encourage pupils to read regularly and are quick to spot any pupils who need extra help to keep up. This support is quickly put in place and carefully monitored for impact. Most pupils read fluently by the end of key stage 1.

Teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach. They provide clear explanations, ensuring that pupils know the things they need to before completing tasks. A focus on vocabulary ensures that pupils are broadening their understanding of language. Staff also make sure that pupils have time to revisit their learning when they have not understood something. This helps them to remember and understand more over time.

Teachers know their pupils well and set high expectations. Leaders and staff want all pupils at the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to become well-rounded learners. Leaders identify pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. Staff think carefully about the support and resources they give to pupils with SEND to allow them to work alongside their class.

Behaviour for learning in the classroom is excellent, and low-level disruption is rare. Pupils understand the expectations of them and rise to meet these. However, at unstructured times, such as lunchtime and when moving around the school, some pupils are quite boisterous. For example, some pupils run in the school building even though it is unsafe to do so.

Pupils understand why they need to show respect to others. They welcome and respect everyone in school and celebrate their differences. Staff meet the emotional needs of some pupils through extra support and nurture.

Staff feel that they are well supported. They say that leaders consider their well-being and work-life balance. The school and governors value opportunities to share expertise across the multi-academy trust (MAT). The local governing body and the MAT understand and fulfil their roles in governance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that pupils are safe. Staff receive regular and appropriate training that ensures they can identify any problems pupils may face. As a result, staff have a thorough understanding of the role they play in keeping pupils safe. Adults know pupils well and are quick to identify and report any signs that may suggest a pupil is at risk of harm. They record these concerns quickly so that pupils can get the timely help they need.

Leaders make sure that pupils develop the knowledge they need to keep themselves safe in the local community and when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not defined the precise knowledge they want pupils to learn in some foundation subjects. Consequently, pupils do not learn as well as they could, and knowledge is not embedded for the long term. Leaders should ensure that they identify the important knowledge they want pupils to learn from early years to Year 4 in these subjects.
- Staff do not have high enough expectations of behaviour when pupils are moving around the school. At times, pupils run in the school building. This is not safe. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the same high expectations for pupils' behaviour when pupils are moving around the school building as they do for pupils' behaviour in the classroom.

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 2016.

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	146590
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10268428
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Pat Fisher
Headteacher	Kevin Allbutt
Website	lfs.ttlit.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school operates a before- and after-school club each day, which is run by the school.
- Since the last inspection, the school has joined the Talentum Learning Trust.
- The headteacher was not present during the inspection, so the deputy headteacher assumed the role of acting headteacher in his absence.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 the deputy headteacher, other leaders and governors.
- The inspector held a remote meeting with representatives from the trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and geography. Inspection activities in these subjects included lesson visits, discussions with staff and

pupils, meeting subject leaders, and work scrutiny. An inspector also observed pupils reading.

- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to safeguarding arrangements, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors also reviewed the school's evaluation of its own performance and the school's development plans.
- Inspectors talked to staff about their role in keeping pupils safe.
- Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with pupils and observed lunchtime and breaktime routines.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including additional free-text comments. They also took account of responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Emma Gater, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Deborah Allen

Ofsted Inspector

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