

Inspection of a good school: Gnosall St Lawrence CoE Primary Academy

Lowfield Lane, Gnosall, Stafford, Staffordshire ST20 0ET

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

Gnosall St Lawrence CoE Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils attend this welcoming and caring school happily. They embrace the school values of perseverance, kindness and responsibility. All staff provide a warm and safe environment for pupils. This sets the tone for the school day and reflects leaders' strong emphasis on nurture.

Marvellous manners and friendly smiles are second nature to pupils. They speak confidently to visitors and show an authentic concern for the welfare of others. Classrooms are calm and purposeful and interruptions from poor behaviour are rare.

A small number of parents are not confident that all concerns raised about bullying are fully resolved. However, the inspector found that when bullying is reported, it is always investigated and appropriate action is taken by staff.

Pupils enjoy taking on extra responsibilities. For instance, they relish the opportunity to make a difference as school ambassadors. Pupils understand the importance of contributing to wider society through their role as 'courageous advocates'. They have supported various charities by raising funds through activities such as bake sales. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from the wide and varied range of clubs and activities on offer. As pupils stated, 'School gives us the opportunity to do things we wouldn't normally do.'

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

Children in the early years get off to a flying start. From their very first days, staff help them to learn the importance of working hard and behaving well. Staff establish clear routines for two- and three-year-olds. They then concentrate on the key areas of learning. This means that young children are prepared well for their move into the Reception class.

Leaders have put reading at the heart of the curriculum. Children begin learning phonics at the start of the Reception Year. Leaders provide staff with regular, high-quality training, which ensures that they have the expertise to support pupils as they learn to read. Pupils develop confidence and competence by reading books that match the sounds they have learned. Staff make regular assessments of the progress that pupils and children are making. They provide effective support to pupils who are struggling to read and hear them read regularly. This helps pupils to catch up with their peers. Older pupils develop a passion and love for reading. Staff give them plenty of opportunities to read and enjoy a diverse range of books, poetry and stories. Leaders foster this passion through the school-led 'reading challenge'. The pupils develop this love of reading from an early age. For instance, in the early years pupils enjoy sharing stories and rhymes with their teachers.

Leaders have created a broad and ambitious curriculum. This meets the needs of pupils, including those with SEND. They make it clear to teachers what should be taught and when, from the early years through to Year 6. Leaders make sure that staff have regular access to training and support. This ensures that staff have the expertise to deliver the curriculum well. Leaders have structured the curriculum to help pupils learn the important knowledge they need. This helps pupils to know more, remember more and achieve well.

In a small number of subjects, leaders have only recently set out clearly what pupils need to know and remember. In these subjects, pupils are not able to recall their prior learning as well as they should.

Teachers have a firm understanding of what pupils know and what they need to improve on. They use this information effectively to check for gaps in pupils' knowledge and make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum. This helps pupils to secure their understanding.

Staff provide a wide range of interesting experiences to build pupils' character and support their personal development. Pupils love their time spent at forest school, enjoying such activities as making shelters and investigating bug hotels. Pupils also enjoy a wide range of leadership opportunities through the 'global goals' initiative. Pupils learn to care for their environment as well as learning to respect the different ways people live their lives across the world.

The local governing board, trustees and central trust leaders work together to create a formidable team. They provide exceptional support to leaders and the wider school staff. Staff are proud to be members of the school team and are enthusiastic about the training and support on offer. They say leaders are mindful of workload and well-being. Many parents are very supportive of the provision on offer and of the care given to their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are relentless in their approach to keeping children safe. A strong culture of safeguarding pervades the school. Staff know pupils and their families very well. They notice any changes in pupils' behaviour that may give cause for concern. Staff know the procedures for reporting concerns well. Leaders follow up concerns quickly and effectively.

Pupils are taught about the risks they may face in the wider world and online. From the early years, pupils are clear about what to do if they have any concerns or worries. Pupils also spoke about their role as digital leaders, helping to share advice with their peers about how to stay safe online. Pupils say they feel safe in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders are in the process of refining the specific knowledge that pupils need to know. Where this is the case, pupils are not yet remembering their learning well enough. Leaders need to ensure staff understand the changes being made so they deliver the curriculum in each subject effectively.

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 Gnosnall, St Lawrence CoE Primary Academy good in March 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

Unique reference number	141779
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10282677
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	265
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Pithers
Headteacher	Kirsten Sweet
Website	www.st-lawrence.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The senior leadership team has changed since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has extended its provision to include two-year-olds.
- There is a before and after school club managed by the school.
- The school is part of The Saint Bartholomew's CE Multi Academy Trust. The school joined the trust in February 2020.
- The school is part of the Church of England Diocese of Lichfield. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was carried out in January 2020.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

- 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 carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector spoke with leaders about the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector reviewed policies and records relating to safeguarding, bullying and behaviour.
- The inspector spoke to pupils and staff about pupils' safety.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. She spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around the school.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day. She considered the views expressed through the Ofsted parent survey.
- The lead inspector met with leaders of the trust and members of the local governing board.
- The inspector spoke with groups of staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Josie Leese, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023