

Inspection of Featherstone Academy

The Avenue, Featherstone, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV10 7AS

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have created a happy and vibrant place for pupils to learn at Featherstone Academy. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly.

Pupils recognise many positive changes, such as the school library. They describe it as the 'heart of the school'. Many pupils choose to spend their breaktimes enjoying books there.

Some pupils are given a range of responsibilities. For example, the 'eco-council' members walk around the local village and pick up litter. They raise money for their local church. This teaches pupils about respecting and helping their community.

Pupils are calm and orderly around school. At playtime, there are a range of activities for pupils to choose from. Adults teach pupils how to play games. Pupil playtime monitors remind pupils to walk sensibly in and out of the school building.

Bullying is not tolerated by staff. Any incidences are dealt with quickly. Pupils are safe at school. They are confident to speak to a trusted adult if they are worried.

Leaders and staff want the best for their pupils. They have designed a well-structured curriculum. In mathematics and English, assessment is used to understand what help pupils need. However, in other subjects, assessment is not always used well enough.

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

The headteacher leads the school with care and ambition. Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils, including in the early years. Most pupils achieve well as a result. The curriculum is continuously revised and adapted. Leaders have set out the key knowledge and vocabulary they want pupils to learn over time. This is clearly sequenced across the curriculum. Subject leaders are given opportunities to evaluate their subject area. However, in subjects other than English and mathematics, they do not know how to evaluate the impact of their subject area on pupils' learning. Subject leaders understand how learning in their subject begins with the youngest children in school. Transition arrangements between the different early years phases and into key stage 1 are effective.

Teachers' subject knowledge is mostly secure across the curriculum, including in the early years. They provide regular opportunities for pupils to recap their learning. However, in subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers do not always check pupils' understanding well enough. This means pupils can move on to new learning without secure understanding. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary when explaining their work. For example, in science, pupils know the different phases of the moon. Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the support they need in class. They learn alongside their peers. They are

given additional resources to help with their learning, such as planning tools and vocabulary lists.

Leaders have successfully fostered a love of reading in pupils across school. Pupils experience a wide range of books and authors. These have been carefully selected by leaders. Phonics begins from the start. Children in Nursery are introduced to sounds. Most adults teach phonics with accuracy. Leaders provide helpful ongoing training for staff. Effective systems are in place to track pupils who are falling behind. Many additional reading opportunities are given to pupils who need them. Pupils catch up quickly as a result. Pupils read accurately and fluently. Books match the ability of most pupils.

Systems for identifying SEND are robust. Pupils' needs are reviewed regularly. Parents and carers are regularly involved in reviewing their child's needs. Leaders and staff support pupils with additional needs with care and consideration. They take part fully in wider school life.

Pupils behave very well in class and around school. They work hard in lessons and concentrate well. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. During playtime, older pupils take care of younger pupils. They are positive role models to them. Pupils who need help with their behaviour are supported well and consistently by staff.

Pupils have a broad range of wider experiences. These include visits to art galleries and museums, and after-school clubs. Pupils have a strong understanding of what it means to be a good citizen. They understand how people are different and show respect to others. Leaders provide planned opportunities for pupils to broaden their knowledge of diversity and cultures. Pupils are beginning to understand a range of cultures different from their own as a result.

Trust leaders and governors provide appropriate challenge and support. This includes help with staffing and subject knowledge training. Most staff feel supported with workload. Staff and teachers who are early in their careers feel well supported by leaders. Parents and carers value the range of opportunities to be involved in their child's learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff understand a range of risks, including domestic abuse, online dangers and neglect. Leaders regularly check the safeguarding knowledge and understanding of staff. They use this information to provide regular and effective training. Staff are vigilant and know how to quickly identify pupils who are at risk of harm, as a result. Processes for reporting and recording concerns are consistent and thorough.

Recruitment checks are robust. All adults receive rigorous checks before entering the school. This includes volunteers and visitors.

The curriculum contributes well to keeping pupils safe online. Pupils can name trusted adults who can support them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject leaders do not evaluate the impact of the curriculum effectively, in subjects other than English and mathematics. They do not know how the curriculum impacts on pupils' learning, as a result. Leaders should ensure subject leaders evaluate the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning.
- Teachers do not use assessment procedures well enough to identify and address pupils' misconceptions, in subjects other than English and mathematics. Some pupils are moved on to new learning without teachers checking effectively what pupils have learned and understood. Leaders should ensure that teachers are using the school's assessment procedures effectively to check pupils' understanding in these subjects.

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	141278
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10242036
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	249
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sean Starr
Headteacher	Adam Gatrad
Website	featherstoneacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is the first full graded inspection since the school converted to an academy in September 2014.
- There have been several changes to leadership since the last inspection. A new headteacher took up post in April 2021. A new deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have also since joined. There is a new chair of governors in post.
- Featherstone Academy is one of 10 schools in the Greenheart Learning Partnership.
- The school does not use any alternative provider.
- The school has a breakfast club and an after-school club. These are operated by the school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and the chief executive officer of the trust. She also met one other trust leader, responsible for safeguarding.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of other leaders to discuss safeguarding, early years and provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, science and computing. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also looked at additional subjects, including geography and history.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school.
- Safeguarding documents were reviewed, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children. The inspectors examined how staff implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively across the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text responses received during the inspection.
- The lead inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, academy development plan, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records and minutes of meetings and visits by governors.

Inspection team

Anna Vrahimi, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Martin Spoor

Ofsted Inspector

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