

Inspection of Starbank School

Hob Moor Road, Birmingham B10 9BT

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 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?

Across both the primary and secondary phase, pupils embody the STAR values of 'Service, Teamwork, Ambition and Respect'. A culture of high expectations permeates throughout the school. Pupils happily rise to this. Leaders, alongside staff, work tenaciously to ensure that pupils are successful.

Pupils behave extremely well. In lessons, pupils are attentive, respectful and engage purposefully in tasks that are set for them. At social times, pupils play together sensibly with friends. Pupils say that bullying is rare and they value the high levels of pastoral care and support they receive.

The curriculum has been well designed, so that pupils learn well across a broad range of subjects. From an early age, pupils are taught to read quickly, so that they grow to enjoy different types of books and access more of their learning. As they move up the school, pupils' knowledge and understanding in different areas expand and develop further.

Pupils have many different opportunities to contribute and participate in wider school life. There are several different 'Star Sports' that run during and after school, such as football, martial arts and boxing, which pupils enjoy attending. Circus Smash is a particular favourite of the younger pupils. Pupils are considerate of those in and beyond their local community. They have raised funds for the Turkey/Syrian earthquake appeal, delivered hampers to a residential home and collected toys for a local hospital.

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

Trust and senior leaders work harmoniously and effectively together. They have brought about consistent strengths across both the primary and secondary phase. Leaders have an accurate view of the school and the phases they lead. They have successfully and rightly focused their efforts on ensuring that pupils study a suitably ambitious curriculum. This is exemplified by the high numbers of pupils at key stage 4 who study the suite of subjects which form part of the English baccalaureate. Leaders recognise that the next stage of their journey is to develop a cohesive curriculum, which connects the primary and secondary phase together.

Leaders have sequenced topics effectively, so that it is clear what pupils need to learn and remember and how this learning is revisited. Leaders make sure that pupils learn the right things at the right time in the right order. This allows pupils to complete more complex tasks throughout a unit and over a year. For example, by the end of Year 6, pupils create sophisticated pieces of art using perspective.

Older primary pupils' success is supported by the secure start they get in the primary phase. Whether it is 'three-a-day' in Nursery, or 'five-a-day' in Reception, staff bring books to life in a way that hooks children into reading. Staff teach

phonics with skill and precision. Pupils soon grasp the basics of reading. For those that do not, rapid help is put in place. Staff sustain this focus on reading throughout the primary phase. Pupils are very well placed to move into the next stage of their education. In the secondary phase, leaders quickly check for those that need additional support with their reading. Staff provide targeted intervention, which helps pupils to catch up.

The youngest children in the school are, step by step, helped to enjoy learning in the moment, while also being prepared for Year 1. Staff use clear routines to help children to feel safe and be kind and caring to each other. Children know what to do and when and how to do it. They follow the rules and routines well. There is a strong focus on giving children what they need to speak clearly, enjoy books, count and make sense of the natural and creative world around them. This is effective. Children are keen to explore and ask questions to help them know more.

Leaders have ensured that teachers teach the curriculum in both phases well. Teachers model activities to good effect and provide clear instructions to tasks. This ensures that pupils know what they need to do and how to be successful in their learning. Teachers use various methods to check what pupils know and understand. This allows them to provide direct feedback and spot errors as they arise. In many areas, this helps pupils to be secure in what they know and remember. However, on occasion, some pupils lack a depth of understanding of the topics they are studying and struggle to link ideas together.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported very well. Leaders quickly identify those who may have additional needs and what strategies will help them be successful. Teachers routinely use the school's 'Star Maps' to ensure that tasks are adapted effectively. This ensures pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points.

Leaders have put in place a carefully planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. Pupils learn about and revisit topics over time, so that they develop a secure understanding of issues, such as healthy relationships and consent. Pupils' experiences are further enhanced by the faith area and cultural activities, such as the 'Arabic language day'. Leaders ensure that pupils have access to appropriate careers information and guidance. Pupils have various talks from post-16 providers and different employers. The overwhelming majority of pupils go on to secure a positive destination when they leave school.

Trust leaders have a strong understanding of the school. The Academy Transition Board provide effective support and challenge to leaders and regularly visit the school to talk with staff and pupils. The overwhelming majority of staff enjoy working at the school and are proud to be members of the Starbank community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out on adults before they begin working at the school.

Leaders have a strong understanding of the community they serve and the potential risks pupils may face. Staff receive regular training on safeguarding, so that they can spot potential signs of abuse and know what to do if they have a concern about a child. Pastoral leaders work together closely, so that records of safeguarding incidents are well kept. Leaders use this information to act quickly to ensure that any child in need of help gets this in a timely way. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through assemblies, form time and the PSHE curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are still in the early stages of ensuring that the curriculum builds sequentially from the primary into the secondary phase. This means that the knowledge and skills that pupils leave the primary phase with across all subjects are not systematically built upon and further developed when pupils arrive in Year 7. Leaders should look to develop a cohesive, all-through curriculum, so that pupils deepen and connect their learning across both phases of the school.
- In some subjects, the curriculum is not implemented sufficiently well to help pupils develop a secure understanding of their learning. This means that some pupils struggle to remember key knowledge and link what they have learned into larger ideas. Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently emphasise and revisit key learning to help pupils deepen and secure their knowledge and understanding over time.

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	147757
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10267833
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2218
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kamruddin Kothia OBE, DL
Principals	Gaetano Ferrante / Hajra Rifat / Navdeep Malhi / Nadim Riaz
Website	www.starbankschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Star Academies in October 2020.
- Since this time, several staff have left and four new principals have been appointed.
- The school operates from three different locations: Hobmoor Road (which has a primary and secondary phase); Bierton Road and Starbank Road (which both have primary phases).
- The school uses five registered alternative provisions for secondary-aged pupils.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club for pupils in the primary phase.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors focused on the following subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, science, history and languages. Inspectors examined leaders' curriculum plans, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught. They also looked at other subjects to check how they are planned and taught.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum and improvement planning. The school website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also asked how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors met with the chief executive officer, the chair of the Academy Transition Board, and the regional directors for both primary and secondary. Meetings were also held with the principals, other senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments. They also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil survey.

Inspection team

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