

Inspection of an outstanding school: Glascote Academy

Silverlink Road, Glascote, Tamworth, Staffordshire B77 2EA

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 October 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Michelle Powell. This school is part of Fierté Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Maria Hamblin, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Zoe Insley.

What is it like to attend this school?

Since the previous inspection, the standards pupils achieve have declined. Senior leaders, together with trust leaders, are working effectively to halt this decline. They have made some marked changes that are beginning to raise standards. For example, the newly introduced curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. It now provides pupils with learning opportunities in a wide range of subjects.

Pupils and staff are proud of their 'Glascote Family'. Positive relationships are commonplace. Staff work collaboratively to help pupils overcome any barriers to learning, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils are welcoming and friendly and want to learn. They enjoy coming to school and do their best in lessons. Pupils behave well and the school is calm and orderly. They are confident that their teachers will deal with any issues quickly and effectively.

The school's strength is its provision to enhance pupils' personal development. Pupils benefit from an extensive range of activities that they value immensely, especially the school's own farm. Other activities include outdoor learning areas, trips, visits, external visitors, clubs and leadership opportunities.

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

Since the previous inspection, standards have dropped, and pupils have done less well. The school and trust have recognised this and put steps in place that are stemming this decline. Expectations have been raised, a new curriculum has been introduced and the behaviour policy has been updated. Standards are improving.

The school's new curriculum is ambitious and broad. In many subjects, the curriculum is very new. This means that it is not yet fully embedded and has not had sufficient time to have a marked impact on pupils' achievements. The school has carefully considered what pupils must learn over time in most subjects. This work is well advanced in core subjects. In some foundation subjects, the curriculum is not yet as well developed. In these few subjects, the precise knowledge teachers need to teach and pupils need to learn is not as clear. This means learning does not always build on prior knowledge and this slows pupils' learning.

Pupils have gaps in their learning due to previous weak curriculum design. This is especially the case for older pupils. Leaders have identified this, and work is under way to address these gaps. Teachers support the delivery of the new curriculum effectively. They have good subject knowledge and know their pupils well. However, some support staff do not have the same expertise. This means that, at times, they are not fully able to support pupils as well as they could.

Pupils usually receive work that is matched to their needs and abilities. This includes pupils with SEND. Teachers' use of assessments is working well to check on what pupils can do. They quickly spot if a pupil is struggling or has fallen behind. At times, not all staff adapt their teaching effectively to support pupils who need extra help. This means that teachers sometimes move pupils on to new content before they are ready. As a result, gaps in knowledge emerge for some pupils, making it harder for them to learn new things.

Leaders have made reading a priority. Pupils enjoy their daily reading sessions and story time. Teaching of the new phonics scheme is helping pupils to increase their reading fluency. This is generally effective, and more pupils are reading at an age appropriate for them. The lowest ability readers in all year groups are well supported. Staff swiftly identify pupils, including pupils with SEND, and put effective interventions in place to help them catch up.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attendance. Pupils' behaviour is good. Lessons are free from disruptions and pupils play well together at social times. Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly.

Children in the early years settle in well. Staff work hard to get to know children and ensure that they become used to the daily routines. Children begin learning about letters and numbers straight away. They enjoy learning and playtime in the well-equipped outside spaces.

The school promotes pupils' personal development very well. Pupils have access to the school's farm, which teaches them about being responsible and caring. Pupils discuss topical issues in their lessons and learn how to keep themselves safe. This includes online safety. Pupils enjoy the many trips and extra-curricular activities on offer.

The trust clearly understands the school's strengths and weaknesses because they have robust systems in place to evaluate the school's performance. Staff are proud to work at the school. They say that senior leaders are mindful of their workload and care for their personal well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in some foundation subjects does not clearly identify the precise knowledge and essential skills that pupils should know. As a result, pupils are not able to build up their learning over time. The school should ensure that the knowledge and skills pupils are expected to know are clear to all staff.
- Some support staff do not have the expertise needed to support pupils effectively. This means that some pupils are not as well supported as they could be. The school should ensure that all staff have the expertise and knowledge needed to fulfil their roles.
- Some teachers do not adapt their teaching effectively to support pupils who need extra help. This means that teachers sometimes move pupils on to new content before they are ready and this slows pupils' learning. The school should ensure that all staff have the expertise to support pupils' learning effectively.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in September 2017.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	141450
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10290616
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	271
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Zoe Insley
Headteacher	Michelle Powell
Website	www.glascote.org
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school. It is part of the Fierté Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club for its pupils.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, assistant headteachers and other senior leaders. The inspector held a meeting with the trust's chief executive officer, the vice-chief executive officer and the chair of the board of trustees. The inspector met with the chair of the local governing board. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders, early career teachers and the special educational needs coordinator.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 inspector visited the early years for each of the deep dives.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour and interactions during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes and spoke to many pupils during the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. The inspector also looked at responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Bianka Zemke, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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