

Inspection of a good school: Veritas Primary Academy

Weston Road, Stafford, Staffordshire ST18 0FL

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 October 2023

Outcome

Veritas Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Danielle Conneely. This school is part of Reach2 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, Cathie Paine, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gavin Roberts.

What is it like to attend this school?

Veritas Primary School is a friendly, welcoming school where pupils are happy and safe. Pupils are very proud of their school. They enjoy coming to school and achieve well. The school is relentless in its work to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and on time. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school is calm and orderly. Staff make sure that pupils know and follow the school rules. Pupils are extremely well behaved. They are polite and well mannered. Pupils work hard in lessons. Play leaders help pupils to play together and have fun at social times. Pupils say that 'most of the time everyone gets on well'. However, there are occasional 'slip-ups'. Staff help pupils to resolve issues amicably. Any pupil in need of extra help to behave is well supported.

Pupils develop new talents and interests including archery, cookery and wheelchair basketball. A vast range of sports activities help pupils keep physically healthy and active. During residential visits, pupils acquire new skills such as kayaking and abseiling. Pupils practise and improve their French conversation at a Parisian market. Opportunities such as school captains and librarians enable pupils to learn important leadership and teamwork skills.

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

The school has adopted an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. In most subjects, the curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced so that teachers know what to teach and when. Teachers present new learning clearly. They make sure that pupils 'work hard and do their best'. Staff make regular checks on how well pupils are learning the curriculum.

However, pupils do not always learn important facts well enough. This is because, in a few subjects, learning is not ordered in a way that helps pupils to remember and build on their learning.

The youngest children get off to a good start. Adults work closely with parents so that they can plan learning that engages children. Children start to learn to read as soon as they begin at school.

The school promotes reading well and pupils read regularly in school. Initiatives such as book fairs, 'hook into a book', 'reading worms' and '100 books to read before you leave' all help pupils to develop a love of reading. In addition, a wide and diverse range of books are available. The school has recently reviewed its approach to teaching phonics and trained staff. As part of this approach, staff make sure that pupils at the early stages of reading get lots of practice reading books that match the sounds they are learning. Furthermore, any pupil who falls behind is well supported to catch up in their reading. However, some staff do not always address and clarify mistakes as they arise. This slows the progress that some pupils make.

The school prioritises pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and identifies their needs accurately. Teachers adapt the curriculum and make sure that pupils with SEND get the help they need to achieve well in class. There is effective engagement with external agencies such as speech and language therapists. This means that pupils in need of additional support get the help they need. Pupils with SEND are successful in school. They achieve well.

The school provides an extensive wider curriculum offer to all pupils. This includes opportunities to 'sleep under the stars', 'mess about on water' and 'cross a border'. Trips such as a museum visit, farm experience and Christmas pantomime help pupils to deepen their learning. Pupils appreciate and look after their environment. They are proud of their Eco Flag status. As part of the school's work, pupils develop an understanding of democracy. Pupils make decisions and vote as part of the pupils' parliament. Pupils explore world religions including Hinduism, Christianity and Buddhism. They learn about their own and other cultures through festivals and celebrations. All this helps pupils to recognise and respect difference.

Staff are happy and feel well supported to manage their workload and well-being. Curriculum resources and 'marking in the moment' help to reduce teacher workload. Staff appreciation days and team-building sessions are helping to boost staff morale and well-being.

Governors and the board of trustees know the school well. They hold leaders at all levels to account for the school's performance. The vast majority of parents highly commend the quality of education that their children receive. The school is working hard to resolve concerns about drop-off arrangements at the start of the school day.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the content pupils learn does not build in a logical order. This limits pupils' learning and makes it harder for them to learn more complex things. Leaders should ensure that all curriculum areas are logically sequenced.
- Some adults lack expertise in how to teach the new phonics programme. This means that they do not always identify and correct errors in pupils' reading as they arise quickly enough. This slows some pupils' learning. The school should ensure that all staff know how to deliver the school's phonics programme consistently well.

Background

When we have judged 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 April 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' 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	140381
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10290607
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	435
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gavin Roberts
Headteacher	Danielle Conneely
Website	www.veritasprimaryacademy.com
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 April 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Reach2 Academy Trust.

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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of sessions, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector observed children reading to a familiar adult and reviewed reading resources.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation on the school's website.
- 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 observed children's behaviour in lessons and at other times during the day.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding leader, curriculum leaders and representatives of the trust.
- The inspector took account of responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors also considered responses to the pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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