

Inspection of Little Aston Primary Academy

Forge Lane, Little Aston, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B74 3BE

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2023

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

The headteacher of this school is Elizabeth Pearce. This school is part of Staffordshire Universities Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, James Capper, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mary Walker, who is responsible for this school and 19 others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe and are happy coming to this school. They say that this is because they know the staff care about them. Pupils learn about and understand the importance of care and kindness. This creates a positive learning and social environment across the school.

Pupils demonstrate good behaviour and understand and follow the school rules of being ready, respectful and safe. Pupils know what bullying is and if it happens they would report it to adults they trust. They know that this can happen online and in school.

Most pupils do well in their lessons, but this is not the case for all pupils. In reading, some pupils do not get the support they need to overcome their difficulties and this affects their enjoyment of books.

Many pupils attend a range of clubs, including hockey, netball and choir. Some speak with smiles on their faces when they recall the trips and in-school experiences that launch new topics in some subjects. They say this helps to 'bring learning to life'. Pupils know about different cultures and faiths and the importance of including everyone. This makes them feel 'part of a big family'.

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

Since joining the academy trust in December 2020, the school has worked with the trust to make sure that it continues to feel part of the local community. Leaders at all levels want to make use of this partnership to identify new ways to do things to improve the education for its pupils. However, their view of some aspects of the school's performance is not fully accurate.

Many parents report that the 'community feel' is why they send their children here and that they feel part of a 'family'. A significant minority of parents, however, do not feel that communication with the school is effective, and they want to understand more about their children's education.

The school has worked successfully to develop many areas of the curriculum. Subject leaders have been supported to develop sequences of learning that identify precisely what they want pupils to learn. The school has ensured that staff understand the importance of checking what pupils know and remember. However, staff do not always notice when pupils do not understand the learning, especially in reading. They move pupils on to new learning without them being ready for the new information. This results in some pupils falling further behind.

The school has made sure that pupils understand the importance of 'reading for pleasure' and that pupils are able to choose from a wide range of books. This helps some pupils to develop their vocabulary. However, some pupils who are still at the early stages of reading do not receive the support they need to read accurately and

fluently. They do not have sounds modelled to them correctly and the phonics books they read are not matched to the sounds they know. This slows their progress in learning to read.

Children in the early years settle quickly. They begin to learn to read in the first few days of Reception and show a readiness for learning. They begin to concentrate for longer periods of time and enjoy sharing what they are learning. The early years curriculum links well to what children learn in the rest of the school. For example, in history children show curiosity about the world around them and learn about events in the past. Many parents report that their children enjoy coming to school and that they are happy with how they have settled.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are expected to learn the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils are supported to overcome their difficulties and adaptations are made to their learning to enable them to do so. When required, some pupils receive extra support to prepare them for their learning in class. However, some pupils' learning plans do not always match their specific areas of need. Their targets are often too general and do not enable a few to achieve as well as they should.

Older pupils enjoy holding leadership roles and feel that being good role models helps other pupils to know how to act and behave. The school has a clear focus on developing character traits such as respect, independence and confidence. Pupils say that learning about people in history who have demonstrated these values has helped them to be better learners and people.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not ensure that the books pupils read are matched well enough to the sounds they are learning and the sounds pupils encounter are not consistently modelled accurately to them. As a result, some weaker readers struggle to apply their phonics knowledge when reading. The school should make sure that all pupils read books that match the sounds they are learning, and that new sounds are modelled accurately to them.
- Staff do not consistently identify what pupils know and can do, especially in reading. As a result, pupils are moved on to new learning without the secure knowledge they need to understand it. The school should ensure that all staff precisely check what pupils know and remember to enable pupils to successfully build on their knowledge over time.
- Support plans for pupils with SEND do not identify pupils' specific needs. As a result, pupils with SEND do not make the progress they should. The school should

make sure that pupils' support plans identify their specific areas of need and provide staff with clear information to support them.

- A significant minority of parents feel that the school does not communicate effectively with them. As a result, they are unclear about how well their children are achieving. The school and trust should work with parents to build effective relationships and improve communication so parents have a detailed understanding of their children's learning and progress.

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 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	148285
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10290678
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	226
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mary Walker
Headteacher	Elizabeth Pearce
Website	www.littleaston.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Little Aston Primary Academy converted to become an academy in December 2020.
- This school uses one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and music.
- For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of senior members of staff at the school and from the trust and these included: the headteacher, deputy headteachers, chair of governors, the chief executive officer, the deputy chief executive officer, chair of trustees and a member of the board of trustees.

Inspection team

Antony Bradshaw, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Vanessa Payne

Ofsted Inspector

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