

Inspection of a good school: Sun Academy Bradwell

Cauldon Avenue, Bradwell, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 8JN

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

Outcome

Sun Academy Bradwell continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Mrs Laura Niemczyk. This school is part of the Academy Transformation Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sir Nick Weller, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mrs Patricia Beanland.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Sun Academy are taught to live the school motto of 'able'. They recognise that to achieve, believe, learn and enjoy are important. They say, because of this motto, that 'everyone can learn together'. As a result, pupils develop a 'can-do' attitude and engage well in their learning. This helps to ensure that the school's high aspirations for pupils are met.

There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The 'Sun 5' rules ensure that they respond well to these expectations. They behave well and are respectful to each other and adults. They learn how to understand their feelings and trust adults to help them if they have a worry. As a result, pupils feel safe.

The school ensures that pupils are well prepared for life outside of Sun. Pupils respect differences and are curious about the world. They learn to keep themselves safe outside of school, including when online.

Pupils experience a range of activities that bring their learning to life. The school has carefully planned experiences, such as visits to Liverpool and the theatre, as well as visitors to school and special events. Pupils talk enthusiastically about these.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious throughout. It is specifically planned to ensure that pupils can deepen and extend their learning. Pupils make many links with their learning in other subjects. This helps them to remember the important knowledge and vocabulary they have learned previously. For example, in the early years, children are

immersed in understanding numbers. This prepares them well for later in key stage 1, where they confidently add and take away from larger numbers.

Teachers check regularly on pupils' progress. They accurately identify where pupils may need additional support. This support is given quickly. Teachers then plan new learning based on what pupils have learned.

The school has put reading at the heart of its curriculum. As a result, pupils develop a love of reading. Older pupils often read books to the whole class at story time. Pupils can often be seen around school reading, sitting quietly in 'reading nooks'. From nursery onwards, learning to read is a priority. Children start learning phonics as soon as they join the school. Phonics lessons are well structured, and adults ensure that pupils practise the sounds that they have learned. The books they read are closely matched to the sounds they are learning. Those who need extra support in phonics and reading receive it. However, on occasion, staff do not ensure that pupils pronounce sounds in words clearly. This has an impact on some pupils' ability to read words fluently.

The school is relentless in promoting pupil attendance. As a result, pupil attendance is high and improving. The school provides tailored support for pupils and families who struggle to attend school. Pupils behave well in and around school. They are interested in their learning and are keen to contribute.

The school has effective processes to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The multi-academy trust (MAT) supports the school very well in this regard. Pupils with SEND enjoy learning a wide range of subjects. However, in some subjects, staff do not consistently ensure that activities are carefully matched to these pupils' specific needs. This means that pupils with SEND sometimes do not learn as well as they could.

Pupils learn about a range of different religions, cultures and relationships through the curriculum. This means that pupils understand the importance of tolerance and respect for all. Pupils engage in democratic processes, for example voting for their school council representatives. Prefects carry out their roles diligently. Consequently, they are very good role models for younger pupils. All pupils get opportunities to help in class and around school, such as helping in the dining room and playground, as well as being given responsibilities in class.

The school supports pupils' physical and mental health well. It supports these across the curriculum and gives support for those who need it. Parents and carers appreciate this. One parent's comment was typical of many when they stated: 'As a family, we don't know what we'd do without them.'

Staff are proud to be part of Sun Academy. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and actively support staff well-being. Leaders and the MAT ensure that staff have opportunities to improve teaching.

The MAT and local governors know the school very well. They hold leaders closely to account for improvements in the school, providing an appropriate balance of challenge and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Support for some pupils with SEND is not consistently well matched to their needs. Consequently, these pupils do not make as much progress as they could in some subjects. The school should ensure that support is closely matched to meet pupils' needs fully and consistently.
- Some staff do not make sure that pupils blend sounds accurately when learning to read. As a result, some pupils do not read as fluently as they could. The school should ensure that all staff receive appropriate support to refine and develop their knowledge of how to teach early reading.

Background

When we have judged a school to be 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 July 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	142194
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10294614
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Patricia Beanland
Principal	Laura Niemczyk
Website	www.sunacademy.attrust.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 July 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school is part of the Academy Transformation Trust, which consists of 20 schools.
- There has been a change of principal since the previous inspection.
- The school operates a breakfast club and after-school club.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the principal, assistant principal and director of primary education of the trust. He also met three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors and the vice-chair of the trust. The inspector held a meeting with the CEO and deputy CEO of the trust.

- 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. He met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and viewed examples of pupils' work. The inspector also spoke to pupils about science and languages.
- The inspector observed children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 read to a trusted adult.
- The inspector spoke with members of staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys. The inspector spoke to parents at the end of the school day.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, school improvement priorities, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, behaviour records, attendance records and minutes of meetings held by the governing body and trust.

Inspection team

Barry Yeadsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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