

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Silkmore Primary Academy

Exeter Street, Stafford, Staffordshire ST17 4EG

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 May 2024

## **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 interim headteacher of this school is Rachael Trickett. 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 Robert.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school's vision of 'aim high' is lived and breathed by all members of the community. Pupils are proud and happy to be a part of this school. They feel heard, cared for and safe when at school.

Pupils learn about the importance of giving back to the local community. Their character is developed and refined so that they become resilient and independent. The 'sustainability squad' litter-pick around the school and the local area. Pupils also contribute to the 'school step-up' to raise money for those who may not always have a hot meal. This helps to prepare pupils well to play an active role in society and become respectful citizens in the community.

The school provides a vast range of experiences and opportunities for pupils to participate in. The curriculum is enriched with trips, such as a trip to the theatre to linked to reading, a residential in France linked to World War I, and a visit to the space centre linked to science. There are also many clubs that are matched to pupils' interests such as dance club, singing, book club and cricket club. Many pupils take part in these including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

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

The curriculum is ambitious and is well planned and sequenced. It identifies what pupils will learn and when they will learn it. However, in some subjects staff have not identified

the key knowledge they want pupils to learn and remember. This means some pupils are not provided with the opportunity to embed the key knowledge securely enough. Therefore, they struggle to build on their knowledge over time.

Staff create many opportunities to check what knowledge pupils know. This works well to identify each pupils' individual starting points. However, there are inconsistencies in the way in which some staff use this information. Some staff do not adapt their approaches to learning to meet the needs of some pupils. This means that some pupils find their work too easy and some find it too hard.

Staff get to know their pupils well and they form strong relationships. This helps staff to identify pupils who may need have additional needs and need extra help. The school monitors and assesses these pupils closely to identify any SEND needs. They then collaborate with external agencies, staff and the pupil to identify strategies that will help pupils access the curriculum. This information is shared with staff so they can make their lessons more accessible for pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils with SEND progress well.

As soon as pupils start at the school there is a focus on developing their language so they can become fluent readers. There is a mini-library in each class that pupils access daily. The school library is home to a vast range of books. Careful thought has been given to the books that are on offer to pupils to read. Some are matched to pupils' interests and some books help to teach pupils about different families and cultures. Pupils who struggle to read are quickly identified and given extra help they need to catch up.

Pupils behave well in class and at social times. There is a lively atmosphere at break and lunch times where pupils of all ages play together. Older pupils look out for their younger peers and role-model high expectations. Pupils in the early years learn how to share, and they play well independently and in small groups. The 'calm corners' in each classroom helps pupils to regulate their behaviours if they need to. The 'sea room' is where pupils can seek expert support for their emotional wellbeing. This helps pupils to feel nurtured.

As soon as children start in the early years they are taught about the importance of hygiene, being kind and how to stay safe. This learning is built on through the PSHE curriculum as the child progresses through school. The school careers day introduces pupils to a range of careers including police officer, footballer, lawyer and hairdresser. This helps pupils to create aspirations from an early age and prepares them well for their next steps.

Pupils learn about fundamental British values and the importance of democracy through the process of electing 'pupil governors'. The pupil governors have recently helped to secure new football goals for the school playground and have influenced the menu choices at lunch.

Staff enjoy working at this school. They feel valued and appreciate the support that leaders have put in place to manage their work-life balance.

Leaders have pupils' best interests at the heart of all that they do. They have a clear oversight of what is working well and recognise what they need to do even better.

## 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 identify the key knowledge they want pupils to learn and remember in some subjects. This means some pupils are not embedding the intended key knowledge securely enough. They struggle to build on knowledge over time. The school should ensure that staff clearly identify the key concepts that they want pupils to learn, and how to make sure pupils retain them in their long-term memory.
- The school has not ensured that staff adapt the learning to meet the needs of some pupils. This means that some pupils find their work too easy and some find it too hard. The school should ensure that staff are skilled in using pupils' starting points to adapt the learning so that all pupils meet the aims and ambitions of the curriculum.

## Background

When we have judged 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 25–26 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142014
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322874
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Gavin Robert
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachael Trickett
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.silkmoreacademy.co.uk/">https://www.silkmoreacademy.co.uk/</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	25 and 26 April 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection there was an interim headteacher in post.
- The school is part of REAch2 Academy Trust.
- The school has a nursery provision for two-year-olds.
- The school has a pre-school provision for three-year-olds.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

## 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 held discussions with the interim headteacher, other senior leaders, the deputy director of education of the trust, the chair of the local governing body, and other governors and trustees.

- The inspector met with the school's SEND coordinator.
- The inspector met with the emotional and wellbeing leader.
- The inspector met with the school's attendance and behaviour leaders and reviewed records and analysis of exclusions, behaviour incidents, use of restrictive physical intervention and attendance data.
- The inspector visited the nursery and pre-school.
- The inspector met with pupils formally and informally and spoke to pupil leaders.
- The inspector discussed the wider development of pupils with leaders.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.
- The inspector carried out learning walks in some other subjects.
- 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.

## **Inspection team**

Sultanat Yunus, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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