

Inspection of Hutchinson Memorial CofE First School

Uttoxeter Road, Checkley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST10 4NB

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2024

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	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Paula Snee. This school is part of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Kerry Rochester, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sidney Slater. There is also an executive headteacher, Andrea Cairns, who is responsible for this school and two others.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Hutchinson Memorial CofE First School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. However, the academy received an ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Act on 11 January 2022. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Hutchinson Memorial is a school where everyone is welcome. Positive relationships between staff and pupils, supported by the school's values, underpin the school's work. Pupils value the 'kindness that lives within the school', which makes them feel safe.

In lessons, pupils listen well and focus on their work most of the time. There is a relaxed atmosphere around the school. Pupils enjoy being with their friends and they are kind to each other. At breaktimes, pupils enjoy playing a range of games organised by the sports coach.

The school has high expectations for pupils and wants every individual to reach their full potential. It has started to take action to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. However, plans are in the early stages of development and have been impacted by turbulence in staffing.

A significant proportion of parents and carers raised concerns about some aspects of the school's work. They are worried about the impact that staff absence has on their children's well-being and education. Nonetheless, parents value the support that the staff are providing to their children.

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

Children have a great start in the early years. The early years curriculum guides staff so they know what to teach and when to teach it. As a result, children learn new things every day, building on what they already know. Staff know the children extremely well and plan activities that meet their needs. They help them to develop their language skills at every opportunity. In addition, staff maintain strong links with families throughout the year. The learning environment, indoors and outdoors, is well resourced and supports the different areas of learning.

In some subjects, the school has set out the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils will learn from Year 1 onwards, which link to what pupils have learned in the early years. In these subjects, new learning builds logically on what pupils already know. However, in some subjects, this is not the case. In these subjects, pupils sometimes experience a jumbled series of lessons where learning activities do not build on what pupils have done before. This creates gaps in their knowledge and understanding and slows their learning.

In some subjects, teachers have secure subject knowledge. In these instances, teachers explain new learning clearly in a step-by-step manner. Through effective questioning, they check that pupils have understood their learning and adapt their teaching if required. However, this is not the case in all subjects, particularly in curriculum areas where teachers have not received subject-specific training.

Reading is at the centre of the school's curriculum. Phonics sessions follow a set

structure, which pupils are becoming more familiar with. Staff have had limited phonics training. As a result, there are small pockets of inconsistency in phonics teaching. The school has put systems in place to track pupils' progress through the phonics curriculum. This information is used to identify any pupils who need extra help so that support can be put into place.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Pupils with SEND are fully included in lessons and learn alongside their peers. Teachers know their pupils well, and in most instances, plan learning activities that are matched to their needs. Staff are quick to step in if a pupil needs extra help.

Currently, there are limited opportunities to make checks on how well subjects are being taught. As a result, they are not able to identify what is working well and pinpoint any areas that need to improve so they can be addressed.

Older pupils speak confidently about the school's values such as 'kindness and forgiveness'. Pupils embody these values by showing good manners and displaying respect to others. Pupils who sit on the school council and worship team take their responsibilities seriously. They enjoy meeting with the school's church worker. Pupils value the menu of after-school sporting clubs and the range of trips that are on offer. However, pupils' knowledge of other faiths and cultures is less developed.

Those responsible for governance are concerned about the current staffing situation. The school, supported by the multi-academy trust (MAT), has taken quick action to bring stability to the leadership and staffing structure to support the school at this time. Leaders at all levels know improvements to the curriculum are needed and they are supporting the school in this.

Many staff are excited about the changes that are taking place in school, particularly in relation to the curriculum. They say the school has made decisions to support their well-being, which they appreciate. However, leaders, including those at trust level, recognise there is work to do to ensure all staff feel well supported.

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 curriculum from Year 1 onwards does not build on what pupils have learned in the early years. Consequently, pupils' learning is disjointed and gaps in pupils' knowledge appear. In these subjects, the school should develop a well-sequenced curriculum that maps out the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils will learn within and across year groups.

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not taught consistently well. As a result, pupils are not learning the intended curriculum as well as they should. The school should provide teachers with the necessary support so they can deliver the curriculum consistently well across all subjects.
- The school is not making effective checks on how well the curriculum is being implemented. This means that leaders are not always aware of what is working well and where improvements may be required. The school should make effective checks on how well the curriculum is taught so that any inconsistencies can be identified and appropriate support put in place.
- A significant proportion of parents do not feel listened to and they do not feel that their concerns are taken seriously by the MAT. Leaders at all levels, including the MAT, should continue to rebuild relationships with those parents who feel disengaged so that they can work together as a united school community for the benefit of the pupils.

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	143983
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10256852
Type of school	First school
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sidney Slater
CEO of the trust	Kerry Rochester
Headteacher	Paula Snee
Website	www.hutchinson.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 January 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust.
- The headteacher was not present at the time of the inspection.
- A Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hutchinson Memorial CofE First School as a Church of England school took place on 23 November 2023.
- The school has a Nursery that admits three-year-olds.
- The school does not use any 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this 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.
- The lead inspector met with the executive headteacher, the assistant headteacher, four members of the board of trustees, including the chair, and the chief executive officer of the MAT.
- The lead inspector held telephone conversations with four members of the local governing board, including the chair. He also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the Diocese of Lichfield.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders to discuss provision for pupils with SEND, pupils' behaviour, attendance, the early years and additional funding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and art. 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.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school. A group of pupils accompanied the lead inspector on a personal development learning walk around the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text responses received during the inspection. They spoke with groups of parents at the end of the school day. The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation form, school development plan, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, attendance records and minutes of meetings held by the local governing board.

Inspection team

Wayne Simner, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rob Johnstone

Ofsted Inspector

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