

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: James Watt Primary School

Boulton Road, Soho, Birmingham, West Midlands B21 0RE

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 October 2024

## Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded inspection (section 8) suggests that aspects of the school's work may not be as strong as at the time of the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are polite and friendly. They befriend and include pupils from all backgrounds, especially those who learn English as an additional language. This helps newly arrived pupils feel welcome and settle quickly.

The school has high expectations of pupils. It has raised the profile of reading and placed it front and centre of the curriculum. As a result, more pupils now meet the expected standard in phonics in Year 1 and in reading in Year 6. Pupils also achieve well in mathematics. However, pupils' writing is less developed. There is also variation in how well some subjects in the wider curriculum are delivered.

Most staff expect pupils to work hard and behave well. Pupils meet these expectations, including in the early years. Children listen carefully, take turns and use equipment sensibly. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They enjoy school and feel safe because adults are attentive to their needs.

The school takes pupils' personal development and well-being seriously. Pupils start each day with an exercise activity. This gets them off to a positive start to the school day. It also boosts their fitness and mental health.

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

The school has developed a broad and generally ambitious curriculum. In many subjects it is well structured and learning builds sequentially from the early years to Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn alongside their peers. Exciting topics inspire and ignite pupils' interest. However, in a few subjects, some teachers do not make clear what they want pupils to know and learn during lessons. The

tasks set do not help pupils acquire the skills and knowledge identified in the curriculum. This leads to gaps in pupils' learning.

Most pupils acquire the essential skills needed in early reading and mathematics, including pupils with SEND. This is because the school identifies pupils' needs early and provides the right level of tailored support. For example, tasks are adapted or additional adult help is provided. However, weaknesses in the writing curriculum hamper pupils' development of writing in most year groups. Pupils have limited opportunities to write at length using their own ideas.

From the early years onwards, pupils follow a structured phonics programme. Staff model effective techniques for sounding out and blending words. They check regularly how well pupils are learning and make sure pupils get the support they need to improve. Pupils read daily in school. They take their phonics books home to practise their fluency. They also take home a storybook to encourage a love of reading. Staff provide effective support to pupils who fall behind in the reading programme. This helps pupils to improve their reading fluency and catch up quickly.

The school communicates closely with parents and carers and the community. It invites parents to workshops and activities to involve them fully in their child's education. Further support and advice strengthen the home-school relationship that exists, especially with parents of vulnerable pupils. Funding received is allocated carefully, for example, to ensure that eligible pupils receive extra classroom help, attend regularly and join extra-curricular activities.

Behaviour in lessons and around school is calm and orderly. Pupils are respectful to others. When behaviour is less positive, staff deal with incidents swiftly. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the rewards they get for good behaviour, positive attitudes and regular attendance. These incentives work. Serious incidents are few in number and attendance is rising. 'Attendance ambassadors' play an active role in promoting regular attendance in their classes. Their contribution and involvement are making a difference.

Pupils' broader development beyond the academic is carefully considered. They are taught how to keep their minds and bodies healthy. Pupils are encouraged to learn about different faiths and cultures. They visit different places of worship. This deepens their understanding and appreciation of diversity and equality in modern Britain.

The governing body provides appropriate levels of support and challenge to the school. The members visit the school to monitor staff workload and well-being and talk to pupils. Members take their statutory duties seriously and ensure that they fulfil them. However, the governing body has limited knowledge about the implementation and impact of the wider curriculum.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The delivery of some curriculum subjects is variable. At times, teachers do not make clear what they want pupils to learn or set tasks that help pupils acquire the knowledge and skills needed for future learning. The school should make sure that teachers have the skills they need to ensure that pupils secure key knowledge as they progress through the curriculum.
- The writing curriculum does not include sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their writing. As a result, pupils do not learn to use grammar, spelling and punctuation accurately, or build up the stamina needed to write independently and at length. The school should ensure that the writing curriculum is structured so that all pupils gain sufficient practise to develop and embed their essential early writing skills.
- The governing body does not have sufficient oversight of all aspects of the school's curriculum. It lacks understanding of where deficiencies weaken the quality of education across the school. As a result, the actions taken by school leaders are not sufficiently scrutinised and slow down the school's improvement. The school should ensure that all aspects of its work are open to appropriate challenge and support from the governing body.

## Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2015.

## 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>	134102
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10343928
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	435
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Andrew Spence and Felicity Cave (Co-chairs)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jonathan Wright
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.jameswattp.bham.sch.uk">www.jameswattp.bham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2024.
- There have been substantial changes to the leadership team since the previous inspection. Most members of the leadership team have joined the school in the last two years.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and senior leaders. The inspector met with the co-chairs of the governing body. They also had a telephone

discussion with the head of school improvement at the local authority and a discussion with the chief operating officer from Cadmus federation, who has been supporting the school recently.

- The inspector focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: early English and mathematics, and science and history. For each group of subjects, the inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Throughout the inspection, the inspector met with groups of staff. The inspector also met with groups of pupils to talk about their learning and well-being.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: checked the school's single central record; spoke to senior leaders about safeguarding procedures; took account of the views of 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 considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement. Records of attendance and behaviour incidents were checked.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and talked to them about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector gathered the views of pupils and staff on site through discussion with these groups and from their online questionnaire responses.

## **Inspection team**

Heather Simpson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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