

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Aston Tower Community Primary School

Upper Sutton Street, Aston, Birmingham, West Midlands B6 5BE

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 October 2024

## Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The executive headteacher of this school is Jonathan Moore. This school is a standalone 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, Jonathan Moore, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alex Smith.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to school regularly. They enjoy their lessons, and are especially proud of their library near the playground. They make full use of it, including at lunchtimes. Pupils really appreciate the rewards for good attendance, such as a visit to the local 'Star City'.

The school's vision is 'to achieve excellence'. It wants the very best for all to achieve the very highest of standards possible. The school lives up to this aim. Pupils do very well in tests and assessments in reading, writing and mathematics, regardless of their different starting points or backgrounds. This includes for those who find learning difficult and need additional support.

Pupils behave very well in lessons and around school. They have very positive relationships with each other. They respect those with different faiths and views. The 'peer mediators' are available every breaktime to resolve any issues. Pupils feel safe. They know how to keep themselves safe through the regular e-safety lessons in every year group and learning to swim.

Pupils appreciate the many wider curriculum opportunities, such as local trips linked to each subject area. These include Twycross Zoo (science) and 'Birmingham Back to Backs' (history) to see how people used to live.

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

The school has a very ambitious curriculum that provides pupils with a full range of subjects. It has been designed carefully so that there are many opportunities to recap previous learning. These remind pupils of key knowledge, which is particularly helpful for those who speak English as an additional language or those who have missed previous learning. In history, pupils could recap the Anglo Saxons, while making links to Ancient Egypt.

Evidence in pupils' artwork demonstrates how they can draw portraits with an increasing range of techniques as they progress through school.

Reading is a key priority for the school. It has invested heavily in the library and in high-quality books. These reflect the diversity of modern Britain and the wider world. Almost all pupils have achieved the required phonics standard by the end of Year 2. Those who find reading difficult are supported very well to become confident and fluent readers. Well-trained staff deliver the phonics programme to a consistently high standard. Younger children quickly settle into learning to read and adapting to the routines of the classroom.

The mathematics curriculum ensures pupils acquire greater fluency. There are consistent opportunities to recap learning and build on prior knowledge. Many pupils attain a high standard by the end of Year 6. Teachers make sure pupils use the correct technical vocabulary in all subjects, including mathematics. Younger children learn that 'it is a decimal point, not a dot'.

Teachers' subject knowledge is consistently strong. They check how pupils are learning through targeted questions, in line with the school's policy of 'no hands-up answers'. They successfully identify pupils who are not responding to identify gaps and misconceptions, which they address highly effectively.

Teachers adapt work very well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or pupils who are recent arrivals new to English. In a recent school survey on the new SEND resource base, parents were overwhelmingly appreciative of the work the school does for their children, some of them with very high needs.

Attendance has rapidly improved. The school's actions have successfully led to a significant reduction in persistent absence. There have been no unauthorised holidays so far this term.

The curriculum takes sensitive account of the local community context. Pupils are very enthusiastic about religious education (RE), which teaches them about a wide range of faiths and humanism. One pupil, reflecting others' views, said, 'I enjoy RE. I like to learn about other people's cultures.'

Pupils learn about democracy very well through regular visits to parliament, the local council and meetings with the local member of parliament. Pupils elect members of the school council and their chair and co-chair. They are mindful of those who do not have the same rights as them. Pupils take on additional responsibilities, for example as librarians. They are enthusiastic about fundraising, for example Roald Dahl Day. They benefit from numerous additional activities, such as a trip to a virtual art gallery.

Trustees are very committed. They have a range of expertise and experience, including in education and finance. They challenge as well as support leaders. They are very knowledgeable about all aspects of the school. Leaders are very considerate of staff workload and well-being. This is much appreciated, evidenced by the many positive comments on the staff survey.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2019.

## **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>	142686
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10344069
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	351
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Alex Smith
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Jonathan Moore
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jonathan Moore (Executive headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.astontowerprimary.co.uk">www.astontowerprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school runs a breakfast club before school.
- The school does not currently use 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.
- The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher and the deputy headteacher, other leaders and staff.
- The inspector spoke to groups of pupils.

- The inspector met with members of the board of trustees, including the chair.
- The inspector considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. The inspector also considered additional feedback from parents and reviewed responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils. There were no responses from pupils. The inspector considered information on pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- The inspector focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: early reading, mathematics and the wider curriculum (art and design, history and RE). 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.
- The inspector heard pupils reading in phonics lessons.
- 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**

Mark Sims, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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