

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Picknalls First School

Oldfields Road, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 7QL

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 November 2024

Outcome

Picknalls First School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Anne Tapp. 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are eager to learn at this friendly school. They enjoy lessons and have fun during playtimes. All staff in the school expect pupils to achieve well. Pupils behave particularly well.

Staff care for pupils. They provide the support they need. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Careful nurture, coupled with high expectations, helps all pupils to flourish and achieve.

Pupils learn all the subjects in the national curriculum. In the early years, stimulating activities help children get off to an excellent start. This gives pupils strong foundations for later learning. As they grow older, pupils progress well. They leave this school ready for the next stage of their education.

Pupils feel safe and happy here. They learn and play nicely together. They feel able to ask for help if they need it. They enjoy the many interesting and diverse activities they do outside of lessons. They love to learn outside, including in the forest school.

Parents and carers would recommend the school to others. They like that staff know and look after their children with care. When asked what else they like, lots of parents said 'everything'.

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

Pupils learn an ambitious curriculum from the early years onwards. It interests and engages all pupils. The school revised the curriculum recently to help prepare pupils even better for the next stage. It is now part of the trust's new '3 to 18 curriculum'. The curriculum makes sure that each topic taught in the school has a defined endpoint, which all pupils should achieve.

The thoughtful early years curriculum helps prepare children for Year 1 very well. It develops children's knowledge and confidence, including in speech, language and communication. It links effectively to the later curriculum in Year 1 and beyond. The initial help given to children when they start in the Nursery helps them to settle in quickly.

Pupils learn to read early and well. Their phonics knowledge helps them read with confidence and fluency. They write with suitable stamina and accuracy. Pupils also learn mathematical knowledge at the level expected for their age. Extra support for any struggling pupils helps most keep up with others. Most pupils learn well across the curriculum, including pupils with SEND. A few pupils struggle still with reading but are getting extra help. Pupils with SEND are identified and supported effectively.

The curriculum and teaching meet the needs of most pupils very well. This means that most achieve well. In some instances, there are too few checks on whether pupils are ready to move on to the next step. This means that they can be asked to do new work before they are fully ready. In other instances, pupils could move on to do their work in greater depth. For these pupils there are not always enough opportunities to tackle tasks that deepen understanding.

Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Staff show concern for pupils and model high expectations of behaviour and attitudes. They help pupils to practise agreed routines, including cooperating with each other in lessons. All this encourages polite and considerate behaviour and an ethos of respect and tolerance. Pupils' positive attitudes are reflected in their high levels of attendance.

Pupils' wider development is a focus for the school. It underpins much else that the school does. The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe and healthy. It helps pupils to learn about different beliefs and traditions. The school gives all pupils lots of opportunities to lead and assume responsibility. This includes being on the school council or acting as a playground buddy. Assemblies, clubs and visits enrich pupils' learning. Pupils love the regular 'surprise' assemblies. Most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, take part in a sport or activity club.

Leaders have maintained standards in the school since the last inspection. They enjoy active support from the effective local governing body. In turn, the school benefits from

expert trust support. All involved in leadership and governance in the school act in the pupils' best interests.

Regular training provides expert support for staff. It includes support for curriculum and safeguarding. This training is often led by the trust, which supports the school well. Staff are very supportive of the school, as are parents. They share the school's unwavering ambition for all pupils. Parents like seeing staff at the start and end of the school day. It helps to foster strong links between home and school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Checks on whether pupils are ready to move on to next steps in learning are not always frequent or rigorous enough. This means that staff are not always clear if pupils have grasped all new learning or if they could explore learning in greater depth. As a result, a few pupils struggle and others miss out on deeper learning. The school should improve its assessment arrangements so that these pupils move on only when they are fully ready and that those who are ready to do so have more opportunities to explore their learning in greater depth.

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 January 2020.

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 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	143952
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10344130
Type of school	First
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	292
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sidney Slater
CEO of the trust	Kerry Rochester
Headteacher	Anne Tapp
Website	www.picknalls.com
Dates of previous inspection	28 to 29 January 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- A private before- and after-school club operates on the school site.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, other school leaders, teaching staff and groups of pupils.

- The inspector met with the chair of the trust board, other trustees, and members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector met with the CEO and two other trust leaders.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 considered the responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Mike Cladingbowl, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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