

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Meadows Primary Academy

Poplar Drive, Blurton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 3AZ

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 December 2024

Outcome

The Meadows Primary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of the school is Helen Cunliffe. This school is part of The Shaw Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jo Heard-Jones, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Meehan.

What is it like to attend this school?

The Meadows Primary Academy is 'sowing the seeds of success'. This motto is the golden thread throughout all the school's work. The school has high ambitions for all pupils, whatever their background. It strives to ensure that pupils learn well and are prepared for later life. Pupils rise to these high expectations. They enjoy learning and succeed.

Around the school, pupils conduct themselves well. From Nursery, children understand the school's expectations and routines. Pupils understand that they should 'be ready, be respectful, be safe'. They love to celebrate the school's values through characters, such as 'Aspirational Amar', 'Kind Kim' and 'Resilient Rehana'. Pupils say these values 'set us up for life'.

Pupils say that teachers keep them safe. They know they can approach a trusted adult or report using an online system if they have any concerns. Pupils who need extra help to keep themselves and others safe receive specific support to enable them to behave well.

The school wants all pupils to have high aspirations. It provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about and discuss the different careers available to them in the future. As a result, pupils develop ambitions to be astrophysicists, paramedics, authors and gas engineers.

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

The school has created an ambitious curriculum. It is clear what pupils need to learn at each stage of the curriculum, including the early years. The curriculum is designed to build on prior learning. From Nursery, there is a strong focus on developing pupils' vocabulary. Pupils say that the many visits and experiences they receive helps them to understand what they have learned. For example, they can explain how a visit to a science museum has helped them to understand the practical application of circuits, which they had learned about in class.

Teachers know how to deliver the school curriculum well. They introduce new learning clearly and make links with what pupils have learned previously. This helps pupils to learn well over time. However, sometimes the checks that teachers make on pupils' learning do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge or enable pupils to learn more if they are ready to do so.

Robust procedures identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) rapidly. The school understands the best ways to meet their needs. Teaching staff adapt lessons to ensure pupils with SEND can learn alongside their peers. Pupils with SEND use technology well when they are learning. As a result, pupils with SEND make good progress through the curriculum and achieve well.

Reading is a cornerstone of the curriculum. Adults are experts in the teaching of phonics. They quickly identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind. These pupils receive the additional support they need to catch up. Staff carefully match reading books to pupils' stages of reading. This enables pupils to build their fluency and confidence. The school has selected texts to support pupils to develop an appreciation of literature and a love of reading. Pupils enjoy opportunities to read in the Reading Café in their free time. Older pupils support younger pupils in reading through being 'reading buddies'. Consequently, pupils develop a love of reading.

Adults have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The school's behaviour systems are consistently applied. Pupils understand how to behave well. As a result, challenging incidents in relation to pupil behaviour have considerably reduced. Pupils know about how to understand and control their emotions. Pupils attend well. The school swiftly addresses any decline in attendance.

The school's provision for pupils' broader development is well considered and thorough. Pupils understand the diversity of modern Britain. They learn how to become thoughtful young people, who respect and appreciate the diversity of the world in which they live. Pupils are regularly consulted with in relation to the extra-curricular clubs provided by the school. They enjoy attending clubs such as gardening, fashion design, science and a variety of sports. Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to school life. These include prefects, class ambassadors and being part of the junior leadership team. Pupils are keen to apply for roles through the school's 'job centre', such as catering assistants and resource monitors. Pupils say, 'We develop responsibility so we have a path for life.'

The trust and academy council are effective in holding leaders to account. Their skills have been instrumental in developing all aspects of the school's work. Staff appreciate the attention leaders give in relation to their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, staff do not always check how well pupils are learning in lessons. This means that some pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should make sure that teachers thoroughly check on how well pupils are learning throughout lessons.

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 predecessor school, Blurton Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2014.

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	146473
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10344156
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	367
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Meehan
CEO of the trust	Jo Heard-Jones
Headteacher	Helen Cunliffe
Website	www.themeadowsprimaryacademy.org.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school operates a breakfast club.
- The school is part of The Shaw Education Trust, which consists of 31 schools.

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 school leaders and has taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, groups of staff and pupils.

- The inspector met with the chair of the academy council and one trustee. The inspector held a meeting with the CEO of the trust.
- 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 visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also spoke to pupils about their work.
- The inspector heard pupils in key stage 1 and 2 read.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. He also took into consideration the online staff and pupil surveys. The inspector spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Barry Yardsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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