

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Leonard's CofE First School

School Lane, Dunston, Stafford, Staffordshire ST18 9AG

Inspection dates:

17 December 2024

Outcome

St Leonard's CofE First School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Catherine Phillips. The school is part of Staffordshire University Academies Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), James Capper, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mary Walker.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a very caring and nurturing school. Staff are committed to pupils receiving a broad education. Values of thankfulness, trust, courage, forgiveness, service and respect are integral to the work of the school. Parents and carers value the school highly.

Staff set high expectations for how pupils should behave. Pupils behave very well. They listen and concentrate for extended periods of time in lessons. Pupils are very sensible, respectful and well mannered. Pupils are happy and safe.

The school teaches pupils about taking responsibility through a range of roles such as school councillors and worship leaders. Pupils take part in a range of inclusive extra-curricular activities, including gardening, choir and computing. They visit different places of interest linked to the curriculum. For example, they visit the Ancient High House and Stafford Castle to learn about the Tudors as part of a local history topic. Pupils enjoy additional learning opportunities in the outdoor woodland.

The school is ambitious that pupils achieve well. While pupils do achieve high standards in phonics at the end of key stage 1, this is not the case for some pupils across other subject areas. The school does, however, ensure that pupils experience a smooth transfer to middle school through carefully considered arrangements.

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

The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is well thought through and carefully designed. The most important knowledge and vocabulary is set out from early years through to Year 4. However, some subjects are not taught as intended. In these subjects, curriculum content is not always taught at the right time to build on previous learning. The school does not always check effectively what pupils know in these subjects. This means that misconceptions are not always noticed and addressed effectively. As a result, pupils do not remember the most important concepts, knowledge and vocabulary in some subjects. This affects the standards pupils achieve in these subjects.

Reading is prioritised. Staff have the right knowledge to teach the recently introduced phonics curriculum. They teach the phonics approach accurately. Staff explain content clearly. They provide pupils with opportunities to practise their phonics knowledge. Daily catch-up phonics sessions take place for all pupils who need them. These are working well and, by Year 2, pupils read with increased accuracy and fluency. Pupils routinely listen to staff reading stories, rhymes and poems. Consequently, pupils are developing a love of reading. Pupils achieve well in reading.

In early years, staff and children have warm, caring relationships. The school has made several recent improvements to Nursery and Reception. The classroom environment is welcoming and is beginning to develop children's independence. Early reading, writing and mathematics are prioritised. Children enjoy listening to stories, songs and rhymes linked to the curriculum. Staff have identified that communication and language and fine motor skills are areas where most children require further support. As a result, children take part in a range of muscle development activities such as manipulating dough and practising writing through drawing and mark making. This is beginning to impact positively on children's outcomes in the early years.

This is an inclusive school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified early and support is introduced in a timely way. Staff know pupils' individual needs and have the right knowledge to appropriately support pupils with SEND. External advice is sought and acted on. Pupils with SEND are well supported.

Pupils attend regularly. The school follows up on pupil absence rigorously, making sure that pupils' safety and welfare are a high priority.

Pupils take part in visits to different places of worship. They understand fundamental British values such as the rule of law. Pupils are tolerant of different faiths and beliefs other than their own. They learn about the impact of citizenship and helping others through charitable work. Each year, the school nominate a charity to support. This year, pupils are fundraising for an African education charity.

The local governance committee and trust board understand their roles and responsibilities. Governors and trustees make appropriate checks on the work of the school. They know what the school does well and what it needs to improve. As a result,

they support and challenge the work of the school effectively. Staff report that their workload is carefully managed and their well-being is 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, curriculum content is not taught at the right time to build on prior learning. This means that the delivery of some subjects is not sequenced well. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to teach the most important curriculum content clearly and as part of a logical sequence, so that pupils remember important knowledge over time.
- In some subjects, teachers do not assess pupils' learning effectively. This prevents pupils from building knowledge securely. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to accurately assess pupils' learning in all subjects to help to address gaps in their learning effectively.

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, St Leonard's CofE (C) First School, to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2018.

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	147423
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10344162
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	83
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mary Walker
CEO of the trust	James Capper
Headteacher	Catherine Phillips
Website	www.st-leonards-dunston.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Staffordshire University Academies Trust.
- The school is part of the Church of England Diocese of Lichfield.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was in June 2024.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club.
- The school makes use of one registered 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 lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. Inspectors held a meeting with members of the trust board and local academy committee. Inspectors met with the CEO and Deputy CEO from the trust. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: early English and mathematics, history, geography and art and design. For each group of subjects, the inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and interactions during lessons, at breaktimes and lunchtimes, and spoke to many pupils during the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. Inspectors spoke to parents. Inspectors also reviewed responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Emma Titchener, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Darryl Asbury

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024