

Inspection of a good school: Etching Hill CofE Primary Academy

Penk Drive, Etching Hill, Rugeley, Staffordshire WS15 2XY

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 December 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Marie Smith. This school is part of the Future Generation Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Stuart Ayres, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Felicia Dale.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, staff, and parents and carers are extremely proud of their school. They describe the school as a caring and happy family where everyone is valued. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and understand the high standards expected of them. Pupils rise to these expectations confidently and are motivated to do well now, and when they leave this school.

The school's aim of ensuring that pupils 'flourish and thrive' means that learning is exciting and purposeful. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the support they receive with both their learning and with their wider needs. They know that 'good learners' show resilience when they find things difficult and a curiosity to want to deepen their understanding. Indeed, such characteristics are displayed in classrooms where 'learning without limits' is the expected approach.

Pupils contribute to their wider community by caring for those less fortunate than themselves. They are encouraged to 'shine and make a difference to others and the world' and many do. Pupils know that every member of the school community should be 'valued for who they are', and their differences celebrated.

There are a wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer, such as STRIVE club, where pupils demonstrate care for their school and local environment. Pupils' wear smiles on their faces when they speak of their time in school. This is indeed a school where pupils thrive.

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

Leaders, governors and staff work in partnership with the trust to provide an excellent education for all pupils. Pupils gain the essential knowledge and skills to prepare them well for their futures. Subject leaders successfully carry out their responsibilities, which include monitoring the impact of planned learning sequences on pupils' learning. There is exceptional teamwork, with staff working collaboratively to support each other to be the 'best they can be'.

Governors, including trustees, have high expectations of school leaders. They have a firm understanding of the school's work because they ask the necessary questions and visit the school themselves to speak to pupils, staff and parents about their experiences. Governors ensure that they are extremely well informed about the impact of improvement actions.

The school's curriculum is inspiring, highly engaging and extremely well designed. Most staff use assessment information well to ensure that new work builds skilfully on what pupils already know. Staff always think ahead about what needs to be taught next and how to connect learning to the wider curriculum. Staff support pupils to embed the important subject-specific knowledge they need to remember. As a result, pupils achieve very well across the curriculum.

Staff have expert subject knowledge. They use what they learn from training to ensure that all pupils benefit from research-informed approaches. The school has effectively addressed many of the gaps in learning that resulted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, pupils are increasingly well prepared for their next stages of learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the right support and resources at every stage of their learning. The school works exceptionally well with outside agencies to ensure that barriers to learning are both identified and addressed. They seek to ensure that pupils with SEND develop strategies to enable them to cope with the demands of learning, showing increasing independence. Staff adapt their teaching to make sure that these pupils can study the same curriculum as their peers.

Leaders prioritise reading. The phonics programme is well structured and delivered. Staff systematically check the sounds that pupils know. Work is under way to review the school's approach to the teaching of phonics to find ways to adapt it to meet the needs of their current pupils. This adaptation is an example of how the school seeks to continually review their provision, putting the pupils' interests at the centre of decision-making.

Staff are deployed effectively to provide daily support for those who struggle with reading. Teachers make sure that the books pupils read match the sounds they learn. As a result, by the time most pupils leave this school, they are confident readers. In English, pupils study high-quality texts, with meaningful links made to other areas of the curriculum. They encounter books from different time periods and cultures, and this helps pupils to make sense of the world around them.

Leaders make sure that pupils' wider development is a key part of the curriculum. Pupils take part in a range of trips and visits. For instance, pupils visit different places of worship, including their local church, a mosque and gurdwara to learn about other cultures and faiths. Pupils talk excitedly about residential visits to places such as Paris, where they get the chance to speak the language that they have learned at school. They also enjoy meeting pupils from the other schools in the trust, who accompany them on this visit.

Pupils value being selected as school councillors and feel particularly proud to be representatives of the pupil safeguarding board. They say that holding such roles makes them feel 'like their voice matters'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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, Etching Hill CofE Primary School, to be good in March 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	147424
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10294674
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	449
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Felicia Dale
Headteacher	Marie Smith
Website	www.etchinghill-rainbow.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school does not use an alternative provision.
- This school is a Church of England school and last received a section 48 inspection in 2016. The next inspection is due in 2024.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 met with a range of leaders, including those responsible for the curriculum, teaching and learning, behaviour, attendance, personal development and safeguarding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into early reading, mathematics, physical education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to pupils about their learning and behaviour and considered samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The lead inspector also spoke with the chief executive officer of the Future Generation Trust.
- Inspectors met with four members of the local governing board.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments from parents.
- Inspectors considered the responses to staff and pupils surveys.

Inspection team

Antony Bradshaw, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sultanat Yunus	His Majesty's Inspector
Wayne Simner	His Majesty's Inspector

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