

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

Rock Crescent, Oulton, Stone, Staffordshire ST15 8UH

Inspection date:

15 October 2024

Outcome

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

The executive headteacher of this school is Amy Graham. The school is part of The Key Educational 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), Christopher Wright, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gillian Latos.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's values of 'friendship, forgiveness, trusting and community' permeate throughout. The school sits at the heart of the local community and is highly valued by parents and carers. Pupils and staff are right to be very proud of their school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. The school has high expectations for pupils' achievements. Pupils work hard to meet these expectations and most achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school sets very high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils consistently follow 'ready, respectful, safe' rules and routines with precision. They are incredibly polite and well mannered. Older pupils enjoy the responsibility of helping to look after younger pupils at playtimes. Pupils state that behaviour is 'good'. Pupils assert that this is a school where they are happy and feel safe.

Pupils take part in a range of inclusive extra-curricular activities such as choir, football, gardening and yoga. The school's choir is active in the local community, for example singing at Oulton Abbey and Stone's Christmas lights switch-on event. Pupils enjoy regular visits to a nearby scout camp to take part in outdoor woodland learning.

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

Governors and trustees understand their roles and responsibilities. They visit regularly and

know the school well. Governors and trustees support and challenge the work of the school appropriately. This has helped to sustain the school's performance. Staff report that their workload is well managed and their well-being is supported effectively.

The curriculum has been well developed in most subjects. However, the school is aware that there is some work to do to develop the curriculum for a few subjects and is working to address this. In addition to this, the school does not have a detailed understanding of how effectively the curriculum is taught for some subjects. As a result, it is unclear about how well pupils achieve in these subjects.

Staff possess the right subject knowledge to teach most subjects. They teach important concepts and knowledge and revisit learning regularly to make sure that pupils' learning is secure. Most misconceptions are addressed swiftly and effectively because staff regularly check that pupils remember the most important knowledge.

The early years curriculum has been carefully designed. The school has selected the most important knowledge and vocabulary it wants children to learn. For example, it has identified that children in the early years need to develop their fine motor skills. Children practise writing letters with increasing control. Children carefully create autumn artwork using paint and natural objects found around the school grounds. Staff use detailed and accurate assessments to design children's future learning. Most children achieve well in the early years.

Reading is a top priority. High-quality training supports staff to teach phonics consistently well. Phonics lessons begin as soon as children start school. Children in the early years are taught to recognise letter sounds and begin to read early on. Pupils receive regular practice so that their knowledge and confidence grow swiftly. Those who need to catch up with their reading are supported effectively. The school has successfully developed a range of strategies to help pupils to become fluent readers. Most pupils achieve high standards in reading.

This is an inclusive school where there is ambition for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff adapt the curriculum when needed and use a range of appropriate resources to support learning effectively. Staff work with external agencies when necessary to ensure that pupils access specialist support. Pupils with SEND are well supported to achieve their potential.

Attendance is a real strength. It is taken as seriously as safeguarding. The school sets high expectations for how often pupils should attend school. It makes sure that pupils attend school regularly.

Pupils are well equipped for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about different faiths and beliefs. They have visited different places of worship. Pupils are tolerant of beliefs other than their own. They relish carrying out leadership roles such as school councillors and playground pals to help make a difference to the school community. Beyond school, pupils understand the importance of helping others and readily raise funds for national and local charities. For example, pupils recently celebrated harvest festival at a local church and

made food donations to a foodbank. Lots of care and thought goes into making sure that pupils' are well supported so that the move to middle school is a smooth process.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not know how effectively the curriculum is implemented for some subjects. Therefore, they are unclear about how well pupils achieve in these subjects and what needs to improve. The school should ensure that it checks how effectively the curriculum is implemented and how well pupils achieve across the whole curriculum in order to make any necessary improvements.

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 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

Unique reference number	142439
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10344065
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	73
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gillian Latos
CEO of the trust	Christopher Wright
Headteacher	Amy Graham (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.oulton.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Key Educational trust which comprises three academies.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was in April 2016. The school's next inspection will be within eight years of the previous section 48 inspection.
- The school does currently not make use of 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other leaders. Inspectors held a meeting with members of the trust board and local governing body.

Inspectors met with the 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, music and history. 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.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and interactions during lessons and 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

Adam Montague-Clewes

Ofsted Inspector

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