

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Waterside Primary School

Eastwood Road, Hanley, Eastwood Road, Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire ST1 3JS

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 October 2024

Outcome

Waterside Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Louise Willis. This school is part of 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?

‘Empowering learners and enriching lives’ is more than a motto at Waterside Primary. Pupils are rightly proud of the vibrant learning environment and the extensive opportunities they have to thrive at this school. Through a rich and diverse curriculum, the school enables pupils to develop their aspirations and achieve their potential.

The school is highly ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school gets to know pupils’ needs from the time they start. Staff put effective support in place to meet those needs successfully. This helps all pupils succeed in their learning. Pupils speak with a knowledge and deep understanding of a wide range of topics.

Pupils show maturity and respect in their relationships with staff and each other. Their behaviour around the school and in lessons reflects the school’s values. Pupils feel safe and happy here. They enjoy a range of trips that enhance the curriculum, such as visits to the theatre. Pupils are proud of their roles and responsibilities, which include supporting the well-being of other pupils.

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

The school is relentless in its drive to provide the best possible education for all pupils. They have an excellent understanding of what this needs to look like for their pupils and how to achieve it. As a result, pupils experience great academic success at this school.

Before pupils start, staff get to know the children and their families quickly. This helps to identify their needs very well, including those with SEND. The sophisticated curriculum and intelligent use of resources successfully addresses many of these needs. For example, the early years outdoor area now provides extensive opportunities to develop children's gross motor skills. Across key stage 1 and 2, tablet computers enable pupils to access the teaching resources throughout their lessons. When working independently, pupils can revisit the 'models and steps to success' used if they forget what to do. Intentional and purposeful links across subjects and years groups, mean that knowledge is revisited and built on progressively as pupils move through the school.

The school also ensures that teaching supports pupils to understand and remember what is important in each subject. For instance, staff use models and images in mathematics lessons to secure pupils' understanding of key concepts, such as exchanging when using column addition. Staff also repeat questions using varied language to embed new learning as a deliberate strategy to support pupils' understanding. The well-designed curriculum, together with the expertise of staff, ensures that pupils learn the curriculum securely.

Staff monitor pupils' learning closely, both in lessons and over time. This helps to identify any misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge. The school provides additional support for pupils through targeted sessions either before school or at different times during the day. Over time, this helps to reduce the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.

Developing language and communication is a priority from the moment children start in Nursery. Skilled staff bring rhymes and stories to life through words and actions. This helps to widen children's vocabulary and develop their love of reading. The school builds on this through daily phonics lessons, where pupils learn to read with confidence and fluency. For those who need more support, this is timely and effective.

The school ensures that it meets the need of pupils with SEND extremely well. It makes careful adaptations to enable pupils to work alongside their peers and achieve high standards. There is a clear focus on supporting both their academic and social needs. For pupils who find the classroom environment more challenging, planned breaks and highly structured timetables work well.

The school's work to develop pupils' character and experience of the world around them is exemplary. Helping pupils move from 'red to blue', develops a positive mindset and resilience. The pupil parliament and various departments give pupils a range of responsibilities. They take pride in the positive contributions they make to their local community. The recent harvest collection of essential items to support the homeless, and books to share with the community are just two very recent examples.

The school is led with integrity. The trust provides the school with an appropriate balance of challenge and support. All decisions are made in the best interests of the pupils and their families. Staff say they are well supported through the professional development opportunities provided. The sense of team permeates all aspects of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 outstanding 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 predecessor school, Waterside Primary School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in May 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	148121
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10344174
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	470
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Meehan
CEO of the trust	Jo Heard-Jones
Headteacher	Louise Willis
Website	www.waterside.stoke.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Shaw Education Trust on 1 February 2021.
- Waterside Primary School converted to become an academy school in February 2021. When its predecessor school, Waterside Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding for overall effectiveness.
- The headteacher took up their post in October 2023.
- A senior assistant headteacher and two other assistant headteachers took up their posts in April 2024.
- The school does not currently use any 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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and the assistant headteachers. She met with the CEO, other leaders from the trust and two trustees.
- The inspector focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: early English and mathematics, history, religious education and music. 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.
- Throughout the inspection, the inspector spoke to staff. She also considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- 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 spoke to some parents at the start of the day and had regard to the views expressed through Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector also had regard to the views of pupils who responded to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Helen Forrest, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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