

Inspection of an outstanding school: Knypersley First School

Newpool Road, Knypersley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST8 6NN

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 March 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

'Learning together, learning for life' sums up this school. Leaders ensure that staff and pupils work well together in this busy and inclusive school. Everyone shares the same high expectations. They want pupils to do their best and achieve well, and new approaches to learning are helping to make sure that this happens.

Staff and pupils treat each other with respect. Pupils love coming to school. They feel safe and happy because they know that adults will help them sort any problems out. They are encouraged by staff and 'Knypersley knights' to be good friends and be kind. As a result, pupils behave well both in and out of lessons.

Pupils understand what bullying is and say that it rarely happens in their school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Leaders provide rich experiences which prepare pupils for the world they live in. Pupils are proud to take on important responsibilities, such as school councillors and 'green ambassadors'. An exciting environment means that pupils experience regular visits to the on-site forest school and swimming pool. Many school clubs have started again and provide opportunities for pupils to develop their own interests in football, dance and singing.

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

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' achievement. Staff have worked together to create a curriculum based around high-quality books and which has children at its heart. Leaders have thought carefully about curriculum planning. They have made sure that the most important knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn start in the early years and build firmly through the rest of the school. As a result, pupils learn well.

Leaders are trialling new ways to deliver the curriculum in some subjects. For example, staff are working with the local 'maths hub' to implement a mastery approach in mathematics. Leaders have not yet implemented this approach fully across the school. In some lessons, teachers do not check pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching well enough. This means that not all pupils are given the opportunity to make as much progress as they truly could.

Leaders are determined that all pupils will consistently know and remember more in their learning. They have recently changed the way that pupils who need extra help are supported. Leaders have now started to ensure that all pupils access the same curriculum as their friends. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders are checking that this support is carefully planned and delivered so that pupils get the help they need to learn well. Pupils with SEND are valued. They play an important part in all areas of school life.

Children in the early years get off to a super start. Staff carefully plan and work with children to make sure they learn and play consistently well. They ensure that children get lots of chances to practise the skills they have learned in the well-planned early years spaces. As a result, children are confident and busy learners. Strong leadership in the early years drives high-quality learning.

Leaders want all pupils to be able to read well and to love reading. No time is lost in teaching pupils to read. Staff know the order in which new sounds must be taught and by when. A new phonics scheme is being trialled in some classes. In these classes, the teaching of phonics is highly consistent, and pupils make swift progress in learning new sounds and blending them to read words in their well-matched books.

Pupils know they should read at home and that teachers check. Pupils agree that reading frequently builds their confidence. Pupils get the extra help they need so they catch up and get back on track. Pupils enjoy choosing books from the well-stocked library. When asked why they like reading, one pupil said, 'Reading is like a playground for your mind.'

Trips to Standon Bowers, the Buddhist centre and the pantomime help broaden life experiences. Pupils support local charities, and the school's 'community kids' enjoy litter picking and delivering daffodils to local residents. They are proud of their roles in school life.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They say that teachers notice if they are sad and take time to find out why. Pupils are confident that teachers will help them sort out any problems or disagreements they have. Pupils get on well together. They are tolerant and respectful, and one pupil said, 'It doesn't matter if you're different – we're all a Knypersley family.'

Staff feel incredibly proud to work at the school. All say that they feel well supported by a leadership team that manages the school well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained and know what to do to help keep pupils safe. Pupils say that staff will always try to help them if they feel worried about something. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children feel safe.

Currently, any concerns that staff have are not recorded consistently well. This means that leaders cannot access all the information in one place to inform any decisions they make.

Leaders carry out appropriate checks for new staff. Policies and procedures for staff recruitment are clear and these records are carefully kept up to date.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that safeguarding concerns are recorded in a consistent, well organised way. This means that leaders cannot easily access all the information in one place to help inform the decisions they make. Leaders should ensure that there is a clear and easily accessible system for recording safeguarding information and that all staff receive appropriate training and support in how to use this effectively.
- Curriculum changes have not yet been implemented in all classes. Some teachers do not always effectively check how well pupils are learning in lessons. This means that some pupils do not make the progress they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff are trained in the new curriculum changes and supported to deliver the curriculum equally well.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Knypersley First School, to be outstanding in March 2017.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	146873
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10212538
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	298
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nicola Chell
Executive Headteacher	Abigail Rourke
Website	www.knypersley.staffs.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher is currently overseeing the work of the school. A new headteacher has been appointed and is due to take up post in May 2022.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector held a range of meetings with those responsible for governance. She met with the chair of trustees, chair of governors, one trustee and two governors.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, who is the designated safeguarding leader and acting headteacher.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the office manager, the early years foundation stage leader and other leaders.

- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, design and technology.
- For each deep dive, the lead inspector met with subject leaders or the headteacher, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector made visits to classrooms. Most of these visits were with leaders.
- The lead inspector observed pupils' behaviour around the school, in classrooms and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The lead inspector made visits to the early years part of the school.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The lead inspector spoke to pupils about their learning and experiences at school. She looked at pupils' work to see how well staff implement the curriculum.
- Safeguarding documents were checked, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children. The lead inspector checked that staff implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively across the school.
- Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View and the 54 free-text responses received, were checked during the inspection.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The lead inspector looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, published information about pupils' performance and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The lead inspector looked at information published on the school's website.

Inspection team

Stephanie Moran, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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