School report

Inspection of Ellison Primary Academy

Ellison Street, Wolstanton, Newcastle, Staffordshire ST5 0BL

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	**Good**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Ellison Primary Academy are caring, collaborative, critical and creative thinkers. They love to discuss their ideas and understand the opinions of others. Pupils are inquisitive and show curiosity in their learning. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. They ensure that pupils are well prepared academically, emotionally and socially by the time they leave the school. Parents and carers agree, with one parent being typical of many when they said, 'My child is emotionally happy. The school wholeheartedly provides this important element of life and growth.'

Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils are happy, feel safe and know who to talk to if they need help. Leaders and staff encourage pupils to understand the effects of poor behaviour and how to improve their behaviour if necessary. Pupils understand the importance of speaking up if they think that bullying could take place. They are confident that if bullying happens, staff will deal with it.

Pupils speak positively about the wide-ranging enrichment opportunities they have. They feel that regular opportunities to work with a theatre company help to build their confidence. They enjoy a range of clubs such as golf, netball, arts and crafts and well-being.

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

Leaders have a clear vision for the school. They know the school well and have developed a curriculum that is broad and ambitious. Leaders have high aspirations for all staff and pupils.

The well-sequenced curriculum starts in the early years. Curriculum planning sets out clearly what pupils should be learning and when. In some subjects, the activities that teachers provide for pupils enable pupils to make very strong progress. Pupils' progress in some other subjects is not as consistently strong. This is because the activities that some staff provide sometimes do not help pupils to learn as well as they could. Nevertheless, overall, pupils achieve well across the curriculum. Teachers use assessment strategies well. They regularly check on pupils' learning in lessons and adapt their teaching to respond to any issues.

Leaders place a high priority on teaching pupils to read. Highly skilled staff teach phonics from the moment pupils start school. Staff support pupils expertly to learn new sounds. Pupils secure their knowledge of these sounds quickly. Same-day support is given to any pupils who struggle. Many pupils read regularly at home and get rewarded for this. Leaders link interesting books and texts to learning. Pupils talk enthusiastically about both fiction and non-fiction books. Leaders' actions have ensured that pupils develop into confident and fluent readers.

Leaders make sure that children get a good start in school. Staff in the early years help children to feel safe and quickly develop confidence. Children delight in talking together and sharing what they are doing. For example, children encouraged each other to complete an obstacle course and cheered when one child shouted, 'I did it!'.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive good support and are fully included in all aspects of school life. The special educational needs coordinator knows pupils well. The needs of pupils with SEND are identified early and extra support is put in place. Occasionally, for some pupils with SEND in some subjects, support is not always matched closely enough to their needs in lessons.

Leaders have thought carefully about how to promote pupils' personal development. It is a strength of the school. Pupils have a wide variety of roles and responsibilities. For example, members of the school council, science ambassadors, eco-heads and sports ambassadors all take their roles seriously. They say, 'We have lots of chances to interact and have an impact on the school.' Pupils enjoy well-planned educational visits and visitors and feel that these enrich their learning.

Leaders have placed a strong emphasis on pupils' physical and mental health. Pupils carry out a 'daily mile' and have a wide range of equipment to exercise on when outside. Pupils discuss mental health issues regularly, and extra support is given to those who need it. Pupils have a deep understanding of equalities. As one pupil said, 'We respect everyone, no matter what. It's the right thing to do.'

Governors and the multi-academy trust (MAT) know the school well. The MAT provides a wide range of support, which leaders and staff appreciate, not least in relation to their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand their role in keeping pupils safe. They know what to do if they have concerns about pupils and they act promptly. Leaders take the necessary action to support pupils who need help. This includes working with families and external agencies when needed.

Pupils have a very thorough understanding of how to stay safe online. They know how to use the 'stay sharp, be alert, be secure, be kind and be brave' rules in order to stay safe online both at school and at home. They have many opportunities to learn about and discuss potential safeguarding issues.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, in a very small number of subjects, the activities provided do not help some pupils to learn the curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not learn and remember as much as they could and make consistently strong progress. Leaders should ensure that staff provide activities that help pupils to learn the curriculum and make consistently strong progress in all subjects.
- On occasion, teachers do not adapt learning well for pupils with SEND. This means that pupils with SEND do not always learn as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that support for pupils with SEND is closely matched to their needs to help them to learn well.

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' 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	142984
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10241301
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	358
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Angela James
Headteacher	Nichola Gibson
Website	www.ellison.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher and the head of school. He also met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He met with three members of the MAT, including the chair of the trust.
- The inspectors viewed a range of safeguarding documents. They examined checks on safer recruitment and spoke with members of staff to check their safeguarding knowledge.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, physical education, history and computing. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and viewed examples of pupils' work. An inspector also spoke to the subject leaders for design and technology, art and science.
- An inspector observed children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 read to a trusted adult.
- The inspectors spoke with members of staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- The inspectors considered the responses, including the free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys. An inspector spoke to parents and carers at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents provided by the school. These included the school's self-evaluation, school improvement priorities, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, behaviour records, attendance records and minutes of meetings held by the governing body.

Inspection team

Barry Yeardsley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Rachel King	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Ray	Ofsted Inspector

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