

Inspection of a good school: Straits Primary School

Longfellow Road, Lower Gornal, Dudley, West Midlands DY3 3EE

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

Straits Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

School life is packed full of interesting things to do. As well as learning a broad range of subjects, pupils can sign up for a variety of after-school clubs. From choir to yoga, there is plenty going on. There are also lots of trips to different places, which enrich classroom learning.

Staff are polite and kind to pupils and expect them to behave in the same way. They teach pupils to respect others and help one another. They also tell pupils how to spot bullying and what to do if it happens. If anyone raises a concern, staff take it seriously and do the right things. Because of this, the school is a safe place and pupils feel happy and valued. Indeed, pupils respond well to the school's high expectations. They behave well, attend regularly and work hard. By the time they leave, they are well prepared for learning at secondary school.

Parents are very supportive of the school. They say lots of positive words about the quality of leadership, care and education on offer.

Well-informed, supportive and ambitious leadership guides all to do their best.

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

The current leadership is building strongly on the school's existing strengths. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior team recognise the school's successes and have a clear vision for further improvement. To this end, they are supporting subject leaders to develop their roles and give staff regular feedback about their work. Staff appreciate this, feel positive about their work and enjoy being part of a united team. This shared vision supports pupils' good behaviour, ongoing improvement and staff training. For instance, staff have received training about how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They identify pupils' needs accurately and take advice from specialist services.

Curriculum design in the early years is mindful of children's early experiences. It also has an eye on what children need to know to be ready for key stage 1 and beyond. A structured phonics scheme and attention to correct letter formation and pencil grip get children off to a strong start with early reading and writing. Children's reading books match the sounds they are learning. Children read these regularly, both in school and at home. This carefully structured approach continues throughout key stage 1. If anyone needs an extra boost, then staff provide extra sessions to help them catch up.

Once pupils can read fluently, daily English lessons build their knowledge of books and language. In addition, staff plan activities that require pupils to read widely across the curriculum. In all classes, adults read aloud to pupils and promote reading for pleasure.

In other subjects, leaders have identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn. They also know which knowledge is particularly important because of how it helps pupils to make sense of later learning. With this in mind, leaders have selected certain content and concepts to revisit regularly and emphasise so that pupils remember them. In history, for example, pupils' knowledge of settlement enables them to make meaningful observations about change over time. Similarly, a physical education (PE) curriculum ensures pupils learn and practise movements that improve their skills. That said, some classroom activities or resources are not ideal. This is because they do not focus enough on what all pupils need to know or do not provide enough practice.

In mathematics and reading, assessment is a regular routine. Leaders are now considering how to develop assessment in other subjects so that it supports pupils' learning in the most efficient ways.

On top of lessons, the school provides a rich range of extra-curricular activities. Some of these serve to enhance classroom learning, while others introduce pupils to new activities. After-school clubs for choir, sports, crafts, yoga and more mean that there is something for everyone. Take-up is high and leaders keep track of attendance and encourage pupils to get involved. Pupil-led committees make democratic decisions about aspects of school life. In addition, individual roles, such as house captain or play leader, give pupils opportunities to take a lead. Indeed, staff do much to promote responsible attitudes and build pupils' character. They teach pupils the value of qualities such as perseverance, initiative and empathy. This helps pupils to apply themselves well in lessons. Furthermore, there are rewards that recognise and promote positive attitudes, such as a 'citizen-of-the-month' award.

Governors have efficient routines for checking on the school's work. They are well informed, supportive and ambitious in their aims for the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know what to look out for and are quick to report any concerns. Leaders follow these up promptly and share information with other organisations when necessary. If a

pupil does not arrive in the morning, staff find out where they are. If any pupils are upset or worried, then staff always listen to what they have to say.

Through lessons and assemblies, staff teach pupils how to look after themselves and others. Pupils learn about safe, respectful relationships and responsible behaviour.

Medicines in school are managed well. All the right checks on staff and visitors are completed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment in some foundation subjects is still being developed. Leaders and staff have identified what pupils need to know. However, their checks on what pupils remember and can use to make connections with new learning are further ahead in some subjects than others. This means that some opportunities to revisit, check and embed crucial content are missed in some subjects. Leaders should continue to sharpen the focus of assessment so that it is manageable, efficient, helps to deepen pupils' learning and prepares them for what comes next.
- Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum, but some classroom routines can lead to different pupils learning different things. Leaders should continue to develop adaptive teaching approaches so that all pupils can achieve even more across the whole curriculum.

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 school to be good in September 2013.

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	103827
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10282694
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lewis Bourne
Headteacher	Paul Freear
Website	www.straitsprimaryschool.com
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides before- and after-school childcare on the school site.
- Leaders do not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and PE. In these subjects, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work. The inspector also looked at the curriculum in other subjects to check how they were organised and taught. He observed some pupils reading.
- The inspector looked at published performance data about the school and a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the

curriculum, extra-curricular activities, governance and school improvement planning. The inspector examined documents published on the school's website.

- The inspector asked school leaders, pupils and parents about safeguarding arrangements and safety routines. He examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other records.
- The inspector talked informally with pupils, parents and staff to gather general information about school life. He took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff's and parents' views. He spoke with some parents at the start of the school day and visited the before-school breakfast club.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in class, at lunchtime, on the playground and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, the inspector had formal meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, school staff, pupils and governors. He spoke on the telephone with a local authority officer.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023