

Inspection of a good school: Summerbank Primary Academy

Summerbank Road, Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST6 5HA

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good 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?

Summerbank is a happy school where children from all backgrounds get on well. Pupils are kind to one another. Adults in the school have high expectations. They expect pupils to be polite and respectful. Pupils live up to these expectations. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils feel safe from bullying and are confident to be themselves. They know that their teachers will help them sort out any problems if anything goes wrong.

Pupils enjoy reading, and teachers read to them a lot. The school is full of books in the library, in classrooms and in the 'secret library'. Teachers introduce new and exciting books to the class for every topic pupils study. This means that pupils get to know a wide range of stories over their time in the school. The books they read help them to understand their topics better.

Leaders have not made sure that the curriculum and the teaching of phonics in the first two years of school are as well structured as they need to be. As a result, some pupils do not learn to read as well as they could.

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

Senior leaders have made sure that pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils say that the school is a friendly place to be and that they like coming to school. In lessons, pupils quickly move from activity to activity with no fuss. This means that very little time is wasted and pupils can learn more during lessons. Pupils, teachers and other staff agree that pupils behave very well.

Leaders have not yet ensured that the phonics curriculum is effective enough. This is slowing down the speed at which some pupils learn to read. Teachers do not use a consistent and coherent range of materials to ensure that pupils practise the sounds they

are learning. Sometimes, teachers use poor, partially legible resources. Leaders have already identified the problems with their approach to phonics. They are currently researching new programmes that would better meet pupils' needs.

Leaders place a lot of emphasis on reading books. Every pupil reads a wide range of books in class. Leaders have chosen these books carefully to improve pupils' knowledge. Subject leaders have made sure that the curriculum outlines the vocabulary that pupils need to learn. This clearer planning is helping teachers to know what they should teach. In addition, it is supporting teachers to know when they should repeat things to make sure that pupils have remembered them. In lessons, the benefits are clear. Teachers focus in on the main things to be learned and pupils learn them. The emphasis on vocabulary and concepts leads to all pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, learning more and more of the curriculum. However, plans for assessment in foundation subjects are in their infancy. This means that leaders do not always know how well pupils are making progress through the curriculum in foundation subjects.

Leaders have developed a varied wider curriculum. Some elements of the wider curriculum had to be paused because of the pandemic. Now, much of the curriculum is happening again. Leaders have made sure that the wider curriculum gives pupils exciting experiences they have not had before. For example, each year group has trips that are linked closely to the academic curriculum. All pupils take part in these visits. Each class has their annual 'big thing', such as outdoor adventures, visits to the beach and the theatre, residential visits and acting in a Shakespeare play.

There have been recent changes to the local governing board. New governors are about to be appointed and some governors have moved into different roles. As a result, new governors do not yet have the range of knowledge that they need in order to do what they need to. The trust board and chief executive officer are helping the local governing board to fulfil their duties at the moment.

School staff feel that leaders do not ask them to do things that do not have a positive impact on pupils' progress and well-being. Leaders have removed tasks that are not needed. Where assessments were, in the past, onerous, they are being reviewed carefully. Staff say that they enjoy working at the school and that it is a great place to be.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that phonics and assessment may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have put a simple system in place to record any concerns about pupils' safety or well-being. As part of this system, they make sure that any concerns are logged in writing and discussed straightaway. Leaders review every case weekly. Staff have regular training, and safeguarding leaders know the risks that children in the local area face. This filters down to staff, who know just what to look for to help keep pupils safe.

Leaders complete and record relevant checks on adults who have contact with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have adopted several different schemes to teach phonics. Some pupils' progress in phonics is held back as a result of these schemes not being well enough planned. Leaders should improve the phonics curriculum, the resources that go with it and teachers' knowledge of how to teach it.
- Leaders' plans for assessment in foundation subjects are in their infancy. This means that leaders do not have a clear enough oversight of how well pupils are making progress through the curriculum in foundation subjects. Leaders should develop their approach to assessment in foundation subjects so that it helps teachers to know what pupils do and do not know.
- There has been a recent change in the membership of the local governing board and new governors are about to be appointed. As a result of this, new governors do not yet have the range of knowledge they need. The trust should ensure that governors receive the training and support they need to adequately perform their duties in line with the scheme of delegation.

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 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 a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Summerbank Primary School, to be good in January 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.

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	142988
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10212173
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	454
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Guy Weir
Headteacher	Clare Pearson
Website	www.summerbank.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Summerbank Primary Academy converted to an academy in September 2017. When its predecessor school, Summerbank Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is a larger than the average-sized primary school. It is situated in an area of high deprivation.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector did deep dives in reading, art and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector met with members of the trust board, the chief executive officer and members of the local governing body.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector met with the safeguarding team, scrutinised staff vetting records and explored case studies. He also spoke with teachers about their training and with pupils about how staff keep them safe.

Inspection team

Dan Owen, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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