

Inspection of an outstanding school: Cicely Haughton School

Westwood Manor, Mill Lane, Wetley Rocks, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST9 0BX

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Learning is exciting at Cicely Haughton School. Wide open spaces provide motivating opportunities for indoor and outdoor learning. For example, pupils love the BMX track.

Many pupils and their families have not had positive experiences in previous schools. Cicely Haughton gives pupils the fresh start that they need. Staff rapidly build strong relationships with pupils and their families. These relationships help pupils feel valued, happy and safe. Pupils and parents often say that this school has had a massive impact on their lives. Pupils are adamant that they love coming to school now.

Leaders are committed to delivering an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. However, this ambition is not always realised in some subjects and for some groups of pupils. For example, leaders ensure that early readers have the support they need to develop phonics skills. However, they have not thought carefully enough about how to support pupils to develop as confident readers who love books.

Leaders expect pupils to behave in school. Pupils know these expectations and mostly follow them. Bullying sometimes happens, but staff quickly intervene. Many pupils rapidly improve their behaviour and attendance while coming to this school.

The school has an extensive range of well-planned trips, which the pupils love.

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

Leaders are ambitious for every pupil at Cicely Haughton. Supported by the academy trust and the local academy board, they have precisely identified the strengths of the curriculum and where things need to get better. Staff say leaders are conscious of their workload and do all they can to support them.

Leaders have made the changes necessary to improve some subjects, for example the phonics and personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) curriculums. These subjects are coherently planned and sequenced. In these subjects, pupils know and remember more. However, some subjects are not yet as well sequenced. For example, leaders have not thought carefully about how pupils will build on their phonics knowledge, their reading confidence and comprehension. As a result, pupils are not helped enough to develop their fluency and love of reading.

Leaders have invested in published schemes to help develop teachers' knowledge of what should be taught and in what order. However, leaders are not monitoring how well these schemes are being taught. They are not ensuring that all pupils receive a curriculum in all subjects that meets their additional needs. For example, the mathematics curriculum is not always adapted to provide sufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils. Equally, it does not always provide the right support for those pupils with additional special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Consequently, not all pupils make the progress that they could.

Leaders use assessments well in school to identify pupils' starting points. These assessments help to place pupils in the appropriate mathematics and English groups. Teachers continue to assess pupils throughout the year. They use these assessments to identify which pupils need extra help. The extra help pupils receive helps them to catch up or to revisit any prior learning they did not understand.

Leaders ensure that that pupils' SEND are well identified, assessed and the right provision is put in place. All staff know the intended outcomes of pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. Teachers plan specific daily nurture sessions to meet these outcomes. They keep a check on pupils' progress towards the intended outcomes in their EHC plans.

Leaders are taking action to reduce the high number of disruptive incidents. Many of which lead to restrictive physical intervention. Leaders focus on helping pupils to improve their behaviour so that they become more responsible citizens. Staff support pupils to make better choices, and all staff follow the school's reward systems. Inspectors saw few examples of low-level disruption during the inspection.

Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures through a well-planned PSHE programme. They learn about rules and how to respect the rights of others. Residential trips, day visits and activities, such as taking pupils on a train journey, help to support pupils' awareness of the world around them. These activities also build their independence skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff do not take any chances when it comes to pupils' safety. This starts with regular staff training so that they quickly identify any potential concerns. The designated safeguard leaders are tenacious in following up on any concerns that arise. They are determined to get the right help for their pupils and families.

Through the curriculum, staff teach pupils how to keep safe. The staff also reinforce safety messages throughout the school day. As a result, pupils speak confidently about what they should do to keep themselves safe.

Leaders audit safeguarding practices to ensure the highest standards are maintained.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not developed a rigorous and sequential approach to teaching reading beyond phonics. They have not thought carefully enough about which books they want pupils to read and know about. As a result, pupils are not supported as well as they could be to develop their fluency, automaticity, comprehension and love of reading. Leaders should review the way they support pupils to become informed and more confident readers.
- Leaders have not ensured that the content of the mathematics curriculum consistently meets the needs of all pupils in the school. This means that pupils are not achieving as well as they could in mathematics. Leaders should ensure that they review the mathematics curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of the higher-attaining pupils and those with additional SEND.
- In some subjects, leaders have not evaluated how well the intended curriculum is being implemented. This means leaders have not identified when staff are not following the curriculum or where the curriculum may need to be adapted. Leaders should ensure that all subject leaders carefully monitor and evaluate the design and implementation of the curriculum. They should do this so that they can take informed action to improve the curriculum further.

Background

When we have judged outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in May 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	142169
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10269008
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	58
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Susan Corfield
Executive Headteacher	Paul Spreadbury
Website	www.cicelyhaughton.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a primary special school for pupils aged 4 to 11 years old.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school does not have a religious ethos.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school has 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, a trust board representative, the chair of the local academy board, a representative from the local authority, the SEND coordinator, curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils.
- The inspectors reviewed documents on the school's website and additional documents provided by leaders during the inspection.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited

some lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors observed some pupils reading.

- The inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader. The single central record of checks on the suitability of staff to work with children was scrutinised.
- The inspectors observed pupils in class and at other times of the day to evaluate their behaviour.
- The inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and the support they receive to carry out their roles.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Amanda Green, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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