

Inspection of The Fountains Primary School

Bitham Lane, Stretton, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE13 0HB

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 2023

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

The headteacher of this school is Nicola Price. This school is part of Esteem Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Julian Scholefield, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Emly.

What is it like to attend this school?

Ambition is high for all pupils at The Fountains Primary. The school wants pupils to achieve academically and thrive socially and emotionally. Pupils have many special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that can affect how they learn or access the world around them. Parents, carers and staff work together effectively to overcome potential barriers and help pupils thrive.

The school works with parents well from the moment a pupil joins. Parents are positive about the school and the opportunities it provides for their children. Staff get to know pupils' individual needs. They use this information carefully to enable pupils to achieve.

Leaders and staff are eager for pupils to be able to be active members of their school, local and global communities. Enjoyable school clubs, community visits and exciting visits to places such as London, Blackpool and Germany broaden pupils' horizons and enrich their lives.

Pupils are happy and content. This is because the school treats pupils with kindness and care and values every moment with them. Perceived bullying is rare, and pupils told inspectors there is always someone they trust who they can ask for help. When perceived bullying happens, leaders act promptly to put things right.

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

Ambitious leaders, caring staff and dedicated governors expect pupils to work hard, behave well and be proud of their school. Supported by the multi-academy trust, they act quickly when the provision does not help pupils achieve their potential. Staff are positive about the school. They feel it is well led and managed and that leaders care for their well-being. Consequently, this community is driven to get the best outcomes for pupils.

Children get off to a great start in the early years. Before children join the school, leaders liaise with the local authority, pre-school agencies, professionals and parents to get as much information as possible. They use this information well to help each new pupil settle into school. Exciting and imaginative classrooms and outside spaces help pupils to engage with their learning and surroundings. This helps children become enthusiastic and excited learners early on.

Many pupils start at the school with their SEND identified by pre-school services or previous schools. Staff work hard to ensure that this identification is accurate and fully reflects the areas pupils need help with. Educational psychologists, family support teams and other services work alongside staff to provide the right support at the right time.

The school carefully considers the environment and provision pupils need to learn best. The school's curriculum pathway model means that the provision closely

matches each pupil's needs. Subject leaders have ensured that teachers create a series of lessons to enable pupils to learn at different times. When required, leaders have made changes to the curriculum, such as to raise the profile of science or review religious education and modern foreign language curriculums.

The school rightly prioritises developing pupils' communication skills. Speech and language therapists support staff in identifying what is needed for each pupil to give them the tools to communicate. Training for all staff encourages signing, symbols and other communication systems. However, although these strategies are implemented well in most classes, this is not always the case for some pupils who need the most help with communicating and understanding their learning.

The school makes reading a priority. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils learn pre-reading skills, such as awareness of different sounds. Pupils enjoy the daily reading sessions and the special events run by staff, such as the 'Masked Reader'. This helps them develop a love of stories and reading. The school plans carefully to develop pupils' phonological skills, and all staff regularly check pupils' learning. When pupils need more help, the class team works closely with the school's intervention team to provide appropriate extra support with phonics or additional tutoring.

Pupils behave well and want to learn. Staff training sets out the expectations for how staff should support pupils. Staff act on this training and sensitively support pupils during difficult times. Pupils want to come to school and attend well. Leaders carefully consider why pupils might be away from school and provide timely support to families when needed.

The school has thought carefully about the personal, social and emotional skills pupils need to develop to succeed beyond the school gates. Different committees, such as the eco-council and online safety, help pupils take on and learn about responsibility. The school council recently created a child-friendly safeguarding policy so all pupils know how to ask for help when needed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not consistently implement the communication systems pupils need to access the curriculum. While a broad and robust offer exists for developing staff knowledge and skill in this area, some staff do not ensure that pupils are supported with the appropriate spoken language, symbols or signing. This means that some pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school needs to ensure that all staff act on the training provided to adapt the curriculum and provision to meet the children's receptive, processing and expressive skills.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	146071
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10290650
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Emly
Headteacher	Nicola Price
Website	www.fountainsprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 October 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Esteem Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school caters for pupils with a broad range of speech, language and communication needs, social and emotional mental health needs, learning and cognition needs and sensory and physical needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use any form of alternative provision.
- The school currently operates an outreach provision to support pupils in mainstream schools.

Information about this inspection

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

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, communication, physical education and religious education. In these subjects, they visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, and talked with pupils and staff about how these subjects were taught. Inspectors also looked at other subjects in less detail to check how they were planned and taught.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject teachers, trustees, governors, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally with transport escorts, drivers, pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the multi-academy trust (MAT) and the local authority. A conversation was also held with members of the local governing body and the trustees of the MAT.

Inspection team

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Melanie Callaghan-Lewis	Ofsted Inspector
Sarahjane Cuncannon Edwards	Ofsted Inspector

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