

Inspection of a good school: Co-op Academy Friarswood

Abbots Way, Newcastle, Staffordshire ST5 2ES

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 May 2023

Outcome

Co-op Academy Friarswood continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Co-op Academy Friarswood the school's values are at the heart of leaders' work. Pupils believe that the values of safe, trust, achieve and resilience are important. They talk about these things regularly, with one pupil commenting, 'they are as important outside of school as inside.'

Pupils are happy and safe. They enjoy coming to school and say that bullying is not accepted at this school. Pupils say that teachers act quickly to resolve any concerns. Pupils and parents were involved in writing the school's behaviour policy, so that it is clearly understood by all. As a result, pupils behave very well in and around school and there are few incidents of poor behaviour. When this does occur, staff talk to pupils, so they understand the impact of their actions and discuss how they can improve their behaviour.

Leaders have high aspirations for pupils. They ensure that pupils understand the career opportunities which are available to them in later life. There are many planned visits to school, including a range of adults from occupations, such as artists, barristers, paramedics, marine biologists and florists. These visits are planned for each year group, starting from the early years.

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

The school's curriculum sets out the essential knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to know and remember. This knowledge and vocabulary is clear in each subject. Leaders have considered carefully how the curriculum builds on what pupils already know. This starts in the early years. Parents are happy with the school. One comment was typical of many stating, 'I'm very grateful to the school staff for the positive learning atmosphere and support in everything.'

Leaders have invested considerably to develop the curriculum. Staff have received a variety of training, both in school and across the trust. Most subjects are well developed,

and staff are confident to teach them. However, leaders identified that in a small number of subjects, the curriculum needed updating. These curriculums are relatively new. Pupils' subject knowledge is not as secure in these subjects.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain new learning clearly to pupils. They make learning interesting and, as a result, pupils focus on their work and there is little disruption to learning. Teachers regularly check on pupils' learning in lessons and adapt their teaching to respond to any issues.

Leaders have established a positive reading culture across the school. Pupils talk confidently about the stories they like to read. They read a range of texts and enjoy reading at home. Staff read to pupils regularly. The school's reading ambassadors promote a love of reading by selecting books for classes on the topics that they are learning. The books pupils read are well matched to the sounds they know. Leaders have adapted the way they teach phonics. Phonics lessons are planned in a way that builds on what pupils already know. This means that most pupils develop into confident and fluent readers. However, staff do not always use this approach consistently. This means that a minority of pupils do not learn as well and as quickly as they could.

Teachers support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to be successful. These pupils are given carefully considered resources to allow them to work alongside their peers. Lessons are adapted to ensure that these pupils achieve well. A new SEND coordinator has ensured that pupils with SEND are identified early and that parents are kept informed of how well pupils are learning.

Pupils enjoy a range of responsibilities that promote their independence and prepare them for the future. For example, the eco-warriors are proactive in promoting ecology and sustainability. They have secured a grant to build a community herb garden in school. When pupil leaders leave school, they train the new leaders well in order to sustain this work. There is a wide range of clubs on offer for pupils out of school time. For example, cricket, football, netball, entrepreneur, construction and cooking clubs.

Governors know the school well and share leaders' commitment to consider staff workload. The school also receives good support from the Co-op academies trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong, effective culture of safeguarding within the school. Staff know pupils very well and are quick to pick up on any concerns. Staff receive regular and appropriate training, which ensures they can identify any problems that pupils may face. Safeguarding records are thorough and well maintained. Strong communication ensures that staff share any concerns swiftly.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know that adults will help to resolve any issues or worries. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in the locality and online. Curriculum activities,

assemblies, and visitors, such as local police and community support officers, support pupils to keep safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not follow the agreed approach to the teaching of early reading. This slows some pupils' learning in how to read. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the subject knowledge and training needed to follow the agreed approach to the teaching of early reading.
- Some subject curriculums are at an early stage of implementation. In these subjects, pupils' knowledge is not as secure as it is in other subjects. Leaders should ensure that these subjects are planned and delivered well, so that pupils can learn and remember more.

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 predecessor school (Friarswood Primary School) to be good in February 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	144207
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10268419
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	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Caroline Sellers
Headteacher	Lindsey Wilmer
Website	https://friarswood.coopacademies.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school has a breakfast and after-school club.

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 school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher and assistant headteacher. He also met five members of the board of governors, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector held a meeting with the CEO and regional director of the multi-academy trust.
- The inspector viewed a range of safeguarding documentation. He examined checks on safer recruitment and spoke with members of staff to check their safeguarding knowledge.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and physical education. He met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and viewed examples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed children in the early years and pupils in key stages 1 and 2 read to a trusted adult.
- The inspector spoke with members of staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- The inspector considered the responses, including the free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View. He considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys. He also spoke to parents and carers at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Barry Yeadsley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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