

# Inspection of a good school: Ulverley School

Rodney Road, Solihull, West Midlands B92 8RZ

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Inspection dates:

5 to 6 March 2024

## Outcome

Ulverley School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Mark Pratt. This school is part of the Robin Hood 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, Steve Taylor, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Martin Collard.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Inspiration, achievement, and community are more than just words at Ulverley School. They are a call to action and high expectations. The school has undergone significant positive changes over the last few years, and consequently pupils' outcomes are getting better and better.

This is a calm and welcoming community. Warm smiles and friendly interactions are common between staff and pupils. Most parents are positive about the support their child gets in school. One parent whose comments reflect the views of others said, 'Staff have successfully created a loving and friendly atmosphere.'

Behaviour is positive and calm in lessons and at other times. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning, and there is a purposeful air of endeavour in lessons. On those rare occasions when behaviour is not positive, staff swiftly act to provide the right support. Playtimes are well supported by caring and attentive staff who provide pupils with various games and activities.

In and after school, clubs develop opportunities to be sporty and active and perform in front of peers and parents. Dodgeball and rowing competitions develop a sense of being healthy and active. Occasional visits from a 'time-travelling professor' help to inspire a sense of awe and wonder.

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

Across all subjects, the school, supported by the multi-academy trust, has set a high expectation for what should be learned and when. Lessons are precisely planned to help

pupils build skills and knowledge over time. For example, in design and technology, pupils use their prior knowledge about different styles of houses to design sustainable houses for the future.

The teaching staff know the pupils well and adapt lessons accordingly. In most cases, they regularly check in with the pupils to ensure they know what to do in those lessons. In the early years, staff are particularly skilful in making learning accessible. For example, children learning about the number five were surrounded by examples, activities and language about what five is. However, in some other cases, the intent of the lessons is not always as clear, making it harder for pupils to know what they need to do.

Teachers are expected to ensure that learning builds on what pupils already know and can do. In most lessons, teachers help pupils to remember what they have learned before and how this relates to the current lesson. However, some younger pupils find recalling what they have done in previous lessons difficult. This means it is harder for them, as they do not always know where the current lesson fits and how previous learning could help them.

Since the previous inspection, the school has significantly improved how early reading is taught. Lessons and interventions ensure that pupils get the support they need to learn to read. Some older pupils enjoy reading but wish that the library had more exciting books. The school already plans to increase the range of books for those older pupils.

There is a strong drive to include all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) alongside their peers. This starts in the early years when staff understand the children's needs well and swiftly implement the right provisions. When needed, this includes working with a range of specialists, such as autism support services. The butterfly provision is an exciting development that helps pupils regulate their emotions and feelings.

Pupils are eager to come to school, and attendance is high. The school's 'soft start' provision helps those who might find the start of the day more difficult. When a pupil's attendance drops, the staff work hard to understand the reasons for this low attendance and put the right support in place.

At Ulverley, school is far more than just what happens on the school grounds. Frequent trips to places like local museums or shops develop an understanding of the local community. Pupils are encouraged to develop a broader understanding of different cultures and faiths beyond their own. Trips to different places of worship develop a broader cultural understanding.

During the inspection, a minority of parents raised concerns about the quality of feedback about how well their children are doing. The school has already started to develop different ways to improve communication. For example, the school's communication app is used well by many staff to update parents on their children's achievements. However, this is not always the case.

Staff are proud to work at Ulverley and feel valued for their work. They feel they are trusted to be creative and innovative in lessons. Staff told the inspector about the positive culture of working together to get the best outcomes for pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some of the younger pupils in school struggle to remember what they have done in previous lessons and how it relates to what they are doing now. They do not always get the support they need to recall previous learning, skills, and knowledge and apply them to the current lesson. The school should ensure that all pupils have consistent opportunities to retrieve previous learning to know how previous learning can help them solve current learning or build new skills.
- In some lessons and activities, the aim or focus of the lesson and how this relates to the long-term plan for that subject are not always clear. This confuses some pupils, who struggle to know how to get the most from the lessons. The school needs to ensure that the aim of the lesson is shared with the pupils, frequently reinforced, and then assessed to ensure that pupils get the most from each lesson.
- The quality of feedback to parents about how well their children achieve in school varies. This means that some parents cannot understand how they can best help their children or celebrate what they have achieved. The school needs to ensure that all parents receive high-quality feedback to inform them how successful their children have been in lessons and at other times.

## **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 to be good in May 2012.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146693
<b>Local authority</b>	Solihull
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322911
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	476
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Martin Collard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Pratt
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ulverley.co.uk">www.ulverley.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, Ulverley school become a part of the Robin Hood Multi Academy Trust. It converted to become an academy in September 2018.
- A new deputy headteacher and leader for teaching and learning took up posts in February 2019 and September 2022, respectively. Both were existing members of staff at the school.
- A new assistant headteacher took up post in September 2020 to take a lead in SEND and safeguarding.
- The school runs and operates its own before- and after-school provision called rising stars.
- The school does not use any registered or unregistered alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- During the inspection, the inspector completed deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, and design and technology. In these subjects, he visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, and talked with pupils and staff about how these subjects were taught. The inspector also looked at other subjects in less detail to check how they were planned and taught.
- The inspector observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- During the inspection, the inspector had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject teachers, governors, teachers, and pupils. He also talked informally with parents, carers, pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- The inspector spoke with representatives of the multi academy trust, including the CEO and the director of school improvement.
- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority. A conversation was also held with members of the governing body.

## **Inspection team**

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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