

Inspection of Weston Infant Academy

West Street, Weston Coyney, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 6PT

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 September 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

The principal of this school is Julie Birchall. This school is part of St Bart's 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, Lisa Sarikaya, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Johnny Anderson.

What is it like to attend this school?

'Where we grow' is the school's motto and pupils live up to this expectation. They grow in learning, independence and resilience. Pupils from Nursery to Year 2 progress well through the curriculum. They gain a love of reading and secure mathematical knowledge so that they are well prepared for their next steps.

Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum that helps them to develop personally and be proud of where they are from. Their rich learning experiences include meeting famous local artists to inspire their own artwork and finding out about schools in more deprived areas of the world through their fundraising work.

Building effective relationships is at the heart of the school's work. Pupils arrive at school keen to learn and ready to embrace all that the day has to offer. Pupils make friends because they care about each other and appreciate each other's differences. At breaktimes, they play happily with their peers on the playground.

Pupils generally behave very well in lessons and around the school. They enjoy the recognition they receive for being successful. This includes the opportunity for pupils to nominate their peers for 'good as gold' certificates when they have displayed one of the school's values.

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

The school has taken the right action to bring about the necessary improvements to early reading. All staff are well trained to teach the early reading programme effectively and deliver the curriculum consistently. Staff use assessment information well to understand the specific sound knowledge pupils have gained. Pupils who need extra help with their reading are well supported to enable them to keep up with their peers. This means that pupils are progressing well with their reading skills and more pupils are now able to read accurately and fluently. Teachers grasp every opportunity to develop children's language and love of books.

The mathematics curriculum is well established and ambitious. There are lots of opportunities to revisit and reinforce key knowledge and concepts. Supported by the trust, staff benefit from effective professional development opportunities so that they are experts in the teaching of mathematics. Teachers use practical resources and modelled examples to help pupils understand mathematical concepts and processes.

Staff are well trained to identify pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils live up to the high expectations that staff have for them. Pupils with SEND access an inclusive curriculum alongside their peers. Staff adapt the delivery of the curriculum where necessary to meet their individual needs.

The school is redesigning the wider curriculum. In a small minority of subject areas, the school has not clearly identified the essential knowledge that they want pupils to

learn and when. Where intended, learning is sequenced well, for example in history and physical education, pupils build knowledge and skills over time.

In lessons, teachers present new learning well. Pupils benefit from opportunities to work with their friends, sharing their thoughts and ideas. In English and mathematics lessons, teachers check pupils' understanding before moving them on to more complex learning. However, in some subjects, staff have not been able to accurately check what pupils have learned over time. This means that teachers find it more difficult to spot and address any gaps in pupils' learning.

Children get off to a strong start in the early years. The school prioritises learning opportunities that help children to develop their communication and language skills. Children show high levels of curiosity and independence. High expectations for behaviour begin as soon as pupils join the school. They behave well and know the expectations staff have of them.

Parents and carers welcome the way in which the school engages with them. Many comment positively on the pastoral support provided and the caring, nurturing staff who go 'above and beyond'.

The school has recently implemented a new programme of study for personal development. Pupils learn about staying healthy and forming safe, positive relationships. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is strong. During assembly time, pupils learn about the world, different faiths and celebrate achievements. The school encourages pupils to be 'Weston'. This encompasses the school's values of well-being, empathy, strength, tolerance, openness and close neighbourhood links. These values run throughout school life and support and encourage pupils to become good citizens. Pupils enjoy the range of trips on offer as well as the after-school clubs that many pupils attend.

The members of the multi-academy trust, along with trustees and governors, know the school well. They provide strong support to leaders to continue to develop the curriculum. Staff say that they are proud to work at the school.

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 is redesigning the content for some subjects within the curriculum. In a small number of subjects, it is not clear what curriculum content teachers need to teach or when. This means that some pupils may miss out on important learning. The school should make sure that the content to be taught for each subject is identified clearly, alongside when the content should be taught.

- The school is at the early stages of implementing a new assessment system for the foundation subjects. Previously, staff have not been able to accurately check what pupils have learned over time so as to identify any gaps. The school should ensure that assessment is used well to check what pupils know and remember so that teachers can use this information to plan the next steps in learning.

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	143358
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10256836
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	131
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Johnny Anderson
Principal	Julie Birchall
Website	www.westonfederation.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 March 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- The school federated with Weston Junior Academy in September 2015. The schools share the same principal.
- Weston Infant Academy converted to become an academy and joined St Bart's Multi-Academy Trust in November 2017.
- The school runs its own before- and after-school club.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- There is a separate specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND run by Abbey Hill School and College on the school site.

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.
- The inspectors met with the principal and senior leaders.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the trust.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the local governing committee and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. Minutes of governing body meetings, trust board meetings and reports from external reviews were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors looked at records of pupils' attendance and behaviour. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and talked to them about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The inspectors talked to parents at the start of the school day and considered the free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also reviewed the responses to the staff survey and gathered the views of staff and pupils through discussion.

Inspection team

Cathy Young, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Amarjit Cheema

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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