

Inspection of St Leonard's CofE (A) First School

Ipstones, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST10 2LY

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 September 2022

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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders want pupils to grow 'from a spark to a flame'. They aspire for all pupils to do well. Pupils are responsible about learning and enjoy the celebration and recognition of their achievements in the school's newsletter. They relish the opportunity to take on positions of responsibility. For example, pupils act as 'values ambassador'. They enjoy coming to school.

Pupils behave well and are considerate to each other. Pupils say that bullying does not occur but they know a trusted adult to turn to for help if they need it. Pupils learn behaviours to help them achieve the most from each lesson, and consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning.

The curriculum on offer to pupils has developed and is now well sequenced. Pupils have a secure knowledge of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They share their thoughts confidently. Older pupils are role models for the youngest, helping them learn to follow the school's rules.

'Welly Wednesday' gives pupils the opportunity to enrich their classroom learning using the outdoor grounds. They enjoy and value this. The new before- and after-school provision and sporting clubs provide pupils with a range of other activities, for example after-school sport. Many pupils take up this offer.

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

Leaders have developed the curriculum offer for all pupils. It is stronger now than previously. They have focused on defining what pupils should learn through the different topics they study. Complementing this core knowledge is a range of values promoted throughout the school, such as love, curiosity and respect. This helps to develop pupils' personal development.

Leaders' work to improve the quality of phonics teaching is having a positive impact. Staff follow an agreed way of teaching which helps them know exactly what sounds to teach and when. Pupils who are in danger of falling behind get extra support. Most pupils become fluent readers by the time they start key stage 2. This is helping pupils to access and benefit from the school's curriculum.

Not all subjects have had the same level of consistent development. In some areas, the changes to curriculum are still at an early stage of implementation. Leaders have yet to fully embed the curriculum offer. Assessment is effective and staff have agreed a new system for checking on pupils' learning. This is being refined to ensure workload remains well balanced.

Staff provide suitable support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers work together to help to accelerate pupils' progress where they

have fallen behind. Teachers then seek further specialist advice where needed. Staff think carefully about what is needed to help pupils catch up.

Pupils' behaviour is orderly and kind around the school site. Staff model the behaviours they expect to see. Good behaviour is encouraged through collective worship, where pupils receive various messages and reflect upon what it means to be a good friend. This helps them to make good choices. Pupils attend school regularly and staff ensure that attendance remains high.

Children in the early years settle well into school. Leaders support staff to help pupils access the curriculum from the start. Relationships are strong between adults and children. Adults help pupils to manage their feelings and emotions. This helps them so they are ready to learn. The environment is bright and inviting, supporting children to engage in their learning. Leaders' curriculum planning in the early years is not always specific enough about exactly what pupils will learn at different times. This means that opportunities for pupils to learn the curriculum are sometimes reduced.

Pupils are proud and eager to gain the responsibilities they can hold through various 'jobs' in the school. There are a wide range of enrichment activities to develop pupils' understanding of life beyond their locality, for example visiting a faith trail in Derby. Some of the opportunities previously in place to broaden pupils' wider personal development have yet to restart following COVID-19.

Governors have a good understanding of their roles. They have developed suitable action plans to support them in setting the strategic vision for the school. Governor visits are focused on holding leaders to account. For example, governors have made careful checks on the quality of the training that staff receive, to help them to understand their role in keeping children safe.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed staff's knowledge of how to keep pupils safe. Staff receive regular guidance from school leaders to help them identify vulnerable pupils. Concerns are shared quickly. Training ensures that records are suitably detailed. Leaders follow up on concerns to help pupils receive support. Governors have received training and themselves checked on the quality of training for staff.

Pupils understand about how to stay safe online, including protecting themselves when sharing personal information.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not thought carefully enough about the precise knowledge that pupils need to gain in the early years. Because of this, the new learning that pupils encounter does not always build upon the things they already know. This hampers their learning. Leaders should ensure that subject curriculum thinking clearly identifies the important knowledge that children should learn from the Reception Year. This will help to ensure that children's learning in the early years provides the foundations for learning in Year 1 and beyond.
- The school has made improvements to its curriculum thinking. Some of the subject planning has been recently developed, for example in modern foreign languages. The work to embed the recent changes are not complete across the school. This means that some subject-specific content can be missed. Subject leaders should continue to develop their role in supporting staff to teach these subjects well and check on the effectiveness of the new changes.

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	124381
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10241262
Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chair(s) of governing body	Jane Held and Sue Hey
Headteacher	Kelly Stanesby
Website	www.stleonardsfirstschoolipstones.com
Date of previous inspection	28 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized school.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well below the national average. There are no pupils with an education, health and care plan.
- Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The school had its last section 48 inspection in March 2017. Its next inspection will be within eight years of that inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, including the headteacher. The headteacher, due to the size of the school, holds multiple responsibilities. The

lead inspector also met with three governors and spoke to a representative of the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum and assessment practices in some other areas.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of other school documentation, including policies and records of meetings.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector spoke to the designated safeguarding lead. The lead inspector viewed records relating to safeguarding and reviewed the single central record of records relating to recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors also spoke with staff, governors and pupils.
- Inspectors spent time observing and speaking to pupils.
- Inspectors gathered parents' views by reviewing the 19 responses and 19 free-text responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. An inspector spoke to some parents at the start of a school day.

Inspection team

Richard Kentish, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Susan Plant

Ofsted Inspector

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