

Inspection of Ball Green Primary School

Whitfield Road, Ball Green, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST6 8AJ

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 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?

The school motto 'Every child. Every chance. Every day' is realised at Ball Green. Staff go the extra mile to make sure that pupils get the help and support they need. Relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils are respectful. As a result, pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school.

The school is a calm and orderly place in which to learn. Positive attitudes to learning start in Nursery and continue through the school. Pupils say they are not worried about bullying. If pupils are unkind to each other, adults sort it out.

Leaders have high aspirations for what pupils can achieve. Staff expect pupils to work hard and do their best. Pupils meet these expectations. From an early age, pupils learn about different careers. Visitors, including dentists, vets and nurses, come into school to talk to pupils about their jobs.

Staff prepare pupils well for life outside of school. They do this by teaching pupils to behave responsibly and to be active citizens, for example by raising money for charity or by taking on responsibilities in school. This includes being a member of the class council or the eco council. Pupils value these opportunities.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about what pupils learn within subjects. They have put language and vocabulary at the heart of all subjects. This is beginning to make a difference in improving pupils' literacy skills and reading.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), study a wide range of subjects. Leaders make sure that subjects are well planned and sequenced. In subjects where staff have secure subject knowledge, for example in English and history, pupils are making good progress through the curriculum. Where teachers' subject knowledge is less secure, sometimes the mistakes that pupils make go unnoticed. Also, in mathematics, some pupils finish their work before others and have to wait for the teacher to give them another task. This means that learning time can be lost for these pupils.

Leaders help subject leaders to have the right knowledge and skills to lead their subject areas by providing them with effective training. However, this is more established in some subjects than others. This means that pupils are currently making better progress in some subjects than others.

Despite it being early in the school year at the time of the inspection, children in Nursery have already got off to a good start. Adults encourage children to develop good behaviours for learning by using their 'magnet eyes' and 'listening ears'. This continues in Reception. In both Nursery and Reception, adults are attentive to pupils' needs. The development of pupils' language is a key focus. This includes

learning language to express their feelings. Leaders check how well pupils are developing. Extra help is put in place quickly if it is required. This includes advice from the speech and language therapist to support pupils' language development. Consequently, pupils' additional needs are being identified early and all pupils with SEND make good progress.

Reading is a priority for the school. All classes have a daily 'shared read'. Teachers use a wide range of texts to capture pupils' interest. There is an effective reading programme in place. This starts in Nursery. All staff have had training in delivering the programme. Leaders regularly check how well pupils are learning to read. Most pupils are developing into confident, fluent readers. If pupils fall behind, leaders give them extra help.

Pupils enjoy their learning and the experiences they have outside of the classroom. This includes residential trips and visits to careers roadshows. Leaders encourage pupils to maintain active lifestyles by providing a range of sporting activities and equipment for them to use at breaktime and lunchtime. Leaders also support pupils' mental health and well-being. Pupils who need additional help can access this from the school counsellor. Pupils say that if they are upset, they have a trusted adult they can go to who will help them.

Staff speak highly of the support leaders provide for them. This includes teachers who are at an early stage in their careers. Staff say that leaders consider their workload, for example by giving teachers time to plan their lessons together. Staff morale is high.

Governors are committed to ensuring the school continues to improve and that pupils are happy and achieve well. They provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge to leaders. For example, governors check that staff receive training that links closely to what the school needs to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff take pupils' welfare seriously. They report concerns confident in the knowledge that leaders will deal with them effectively. This includes making referrals to external agencies when necessary. The safeguarding team works well together. This means families get the right help when they need it. Parents speak highly of the support they get from senior leaders and the home school link officer.

Leaders complete the appropriate checks on all adults who work at, or visit, the school.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through assemblies and in lessons. This includes e-safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all subject leaders have received the necessary training and support to develop their subjects effectively. Others are new to the role and lack experience. This is contributing to the variability in quality of the implementation of the curriculum and, thus, pupils making better progress in some subjects than others. Leaders need to ensure that all subject leaders get the support they need to carry out their roles more effectively, so that pupils reach their potential in every subject.

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	124020
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10241251
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hannah McCall
Headteacher	Jon Hankey
Website	www.ballgreenprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 and 5 December 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Stoke maintained schools collaboration.
- Since the last inspection, one of the deputy headteachers left the school in July 2019 and was not replaced. In October 2019 a new business manager was appointed.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club.

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 COVID-19 began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders, governors, including the chair, staff and pupils. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, English, mathematics, history and geography. For each deep dive, the 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 inspectors also visited lessons in other subjects.
- The inspectors talked to pupils and staff at unstructured times during the day.
- The inspectors evaluated a range of school documents and looked at information on the school's website.
- The lead inspector checked the single central record and met with the school's safeguarding leader. She reviewed policies and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors spoke to pupils, parents and carers, and staff about pupils' safety
- The inspectors reviewed the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

Lesley Yates, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Allen	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Wright	Ofsted Inspector

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