

# Inspection of a good school: Timbertree Academy

Valley Road, Cradley Heath, West Midlands B64 7LT

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Inspection dates:

4–5 February 2020

## Outcome

Timbertree Academy continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

The school's vision of developing successful, confident and responsible learners shines through everything the pupils do. Leaders say they want to 'make learning difficult to resist'. This is evident in the way pupils talk about their love of learning. Pupils are happy, proud of their learning, confident that they are doing well and ambitious.

Staff encourage pupils to become well-balanced citizens. All pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility for themselves and others, for example as head boy, head girl, prefects, house captains and play leaders. Pupils are proud to help.

Pupils respect the feelings and values of others and learn about the wider world through assemblies, celebrations and lessons. Pupils are incredibly polite and welcoming. One pupil said: 'We play with everyone and we respect everyone. We don't judge. We treat everyone the same. We have no misfits because everyone fits in to our school family.'

Pupils feel safe at school. They say that bullying is very rare. They know that staff would deal with any problem quickly.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy lessons and thrive on the opportunities the school offers.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They have thought carefully about how pupils learn and how to make sure that they remember and apply their learning. Pupils talk confidently about strategies that help them remember learning. These include 'daily recall' and weekly opportunities to remember learning from the previous week, the previous unit and the previous term. This is especially embedded in mathematics. Pupils have excellent recall of mathematical facts and apply these to their learning. These strategies are now used in subjects across the curriculum. However, changes to subjects such as science and

design and technology are quite recent. Pupils are remembering their current learning well but some gaps in prior learning exist.

The teaching of reading is well structured and most pupils achieve well. Staff believe that reading is the key to all learning. Phonics is taught from the first days in school. Nursery and Reception teachers are skilled in teaching phonics. They make the lessons fun. Teachers are ambitious for children. The majority of children move swiftly through the school's phonics scheme. Children who need help to keep up with the programme get the right support. Older pupils continue to develop their reading skills in a well-sequenced programme. They access carefully selected books. Teachers encourage pupils to read at home for enjoyment, which they do.

The provision for pupils with SEND is strong. Pupils are well supported in lessons so that they can access learning with their peers. The well-planned support includes help from adults and the use of tangible resources. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is extremely knowledgeable about the pupils. This helps to ensure that their additional needs are well met.

Teaching activities in the early years are focused well on developing children's knowledge, skills and understanding. Expectations are high. The range of activities on offer is extensive. Children build on what they have learned before. They take on new challenges. Highly motivated, confident children delight in the opportunity to discuss their learning. The provision ensures that all children's needs are met, including those of two-year-olds.

Parents and carers are generally positive about the school. They say that recent improvements to communication ensure that they know more about the school. However, some parents still feel they do not get enough information about how well their children are doing.

The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly. More pupils are in school regularly because the school's attendance officer has worked with families effectively. Systems and rewards are in place to encourage families to bring their children to school regularly and on time.

The school provides opportunities for out-of-classroom learning. Pupils take part in a wide range of trips, visits and activities. Pupils recognise this and say how the activities support their learning, commenting, 'Trips aren't just fun. They help us with our learning.' Every activity in the school is available to every child, whatever their need.

Leaders are passionate about providing pupils with the best education possible. They have created a learning environment which is welcoming and exciting. The relationships between pupils and staff are a strength of the school. Staff say they work hard but have a good work/life balance. They appreciate that leaders have done their best to manage their workload.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and duties. Staff know pupils well and swiftly discuss and report anything that might show that a child is not safe. Leaders have a close working relationship with outside agencies and communicate effectively with them to help pupils and their families.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including learning about online safety. Pupils understand what leaders can do to help them.

Governors are also well trained in safeguarding. They check the school's systems and record-keeping. They have ensured that there is a strong sense of safeguarding throughout the school.

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

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

- Older pupils have some gaps in their knowledge and understanding in some subjects, such as science and design and technology. These historical gaps impact on their depth of learning. Leaders should ensure that a well-planned and well-sequenced curriculum allows these gaps to be filled.
- Parents report that communication has improved recently. However, some parents feel they do not get the information they need about how well their child is doing in school. Therefore, parents do not know how best to support their children's learning. Leaders should continue to engage with parents of all pupils, including those with SEND, to ensure that they receive the information they need to support their children.

## 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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Timbertree Primary School, to be good on 8–9 November 2011.

## 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139768
<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122544
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	254
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mrs Lesley Dolben
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lorraine Adams Miss Michelle Green (executive headteacher)
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 July 2016

## Information about this school

- Since May 2016, the school has had Nursery provision for two-year-olds.

## Information about this inspection

- I carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and design and technology. To do this, I met with subject leaders and teachers, and visited lessons. I looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils about their learning. I reviewed the school's planning for these subjects.
- I met with the headteacher, the executive headteacher, the SENCo and the subject leaders for reading, mathematics, science and design and technology.
- I met with a representative of United Learning Academy Trust and the chair of the governing body.
- I scrutinised the single central record and other documents related to safeguarding, and talked to parents, staff and pupils.
- I considered 20 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

- I evaluated pupils' behaviour in lessons, during breaktimes and lunchtimes, and while they were moving around the school.
- I scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's own evaluation and development plan, the headteacher's reports and external reports.

### **Inspection team**

Eve Morris, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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