

Grange Valley Primary School

Heyes Avenue, Haydock, St Helens, Merseyside WA11 0XQ

Inspection dates

15–16 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The aspirational and ambitious leadership of the headteacher has taken this school from strength to strength.
- The headteacher has built good capacity to continue to improve the school by developing strong senior and middle leaders.
- Children get off to a flying start in early years. Children are inquisitive, tenacious learners. Consequently, they are well prepared for their move to key stage 1.
- Phonics is exceptionally well taught. Pupils quickly develop a love for reading, enjoying the range of books in the school and class libraries.
- The school's considerable investment in staff training pays dividends. High-quality teaching and assessment enables pupils to learn and achieve well across the curriculum.
- The school provides high-quality support to its most vulnerable pupils. The school's strong partnerships with other agencies ensure that pupils and their families receive the support they need.
- Pupils are thoughtful and polite. They work and play well together. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their excellent attendance.
- Governors provide robust support and challenge to the school's leaders. They have the skills, experience and expertise to offer highly effective, strategic leadership.
- The headteacher makes sure that the school constantly seeks out highly effective practice from elsewhere. Teachers and support staff are passionate about their work and are keen to embrace new ideas.
- This is a school where nothing is left to chance. Leaders know their school exceptionally well and make sure that any emerging weaknesses are picked up and addressed with immediate effect.
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace learning. They take pride in their work, pay heed to their teachers' advice and guidance and enjoy the wealth of trips, visits and clubs the school offers.
- Pupils make strong progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, almost all pupils reach the expected standard by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn about different groups of people who live in Britain today.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that pupils are even better prepared for life in modern Britain by providing further opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to:
 - learn about the contribution made by people of different backgrounds, cultures and faiths to the country pupils live in today
 - understand the diverse range of family structures that exist in our country.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher sets an ambitious and aspirational tone for the school. She is relentless in her pursuit to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils. Ably supported by the deputy headteacher and extended leadership team, the headteacher makes sure that there is an absolute focus on teaching and learning.
- This is a school that takes its responsibilities for meeting the needs of every child very seriously. Leaders do not shy away from the challenge of helping some of the most vulnerable pupils from its community to achieve highly at Grange Valley.
- The headteacher ensures that there is a consistent approach to all aspects of the school's work. For pupils, this means a seamless transition between classes as they move through the school. No time is wasted as pupils know exactly what is expected of them, both in their behaviour and in their work.
- The headteacher has distributed leadership effectively across the school. Staff embrace the responsibilities they are given and are passionate about the different areas they lead. They enjoy sharing the skills and knowledge they acquire through visits to other schools, training and research, with their colleagues. Staff talk about how they feel valued by leaders and love being part of the Grange Valley team. Consequently, staff morale is high.
- Teachers are in no doubt about the high standards expected by the headteacher. They acknowledge that the performance management system is rigorous and because they share leaders' aspirations for the pupils, they embrace their own targets. Teachers are fulsome in their praise of senior leaders, who are only too ready to give advice or lend a hand when necessary. Teachers new to the school and in the early stages of their careers are well supported through the school's comprehensive induction and training programmes.
- The headteacher leaves nothing to chance. Detailed analysis of performance data helps her to identify the varying skills of each cohort of pupils. Together with class teachers, the headteacher ensures that provision is tailored to make sure that any emerging areas of underperformance are swiftly addressed. Moreover, in every lesson teachers identify any pupils who have been absent or have struggled. They make sure that support is put in place prior to the next lesson, so that those pupils are ready to move on with the rest of the class. Leaders make sure that no pupils miss out on learning; their meticulous monitoring enables them to quickly plug any gaps.
- The local authority has provided expertise and guidance to the school which has enabled leaders remain at the cutting edge of what is happening in education locally and nationally.
- Leaders are not afraid to adapt and change things that are not working as well as they could. Subject leaders closely followed the roll out of the school's new curriculum before making some well-considered refinements. Consequently, pupils now achieve consistently well in all subjects. Staff make good use of the historical and cultural resources close to the school, such as the museums and galleries in Liverpool, to bring pupils' learning to life.

- Leaders keep a close eye on the impact of the funding for disadvantaged pupils. They carefully analyse information to identify the barriers to learning for these pupils. They use the additional funding to good effect, making sure that these pupils make rapid progress across subjects.
- The school places particular emphasis on the achievement of its most-able pupils, including its most-able disadvantaged pupils. Ambitious targets are set for these pupils so that they fulfil their potential. Teachers make sure that these pupils are given the additional support needed to help them reach the higher standards.
- Senior leaders and governors ensure that the additional funding for physical education (PE) and sports is well spent. Before- and after-school clubs are well attended. Pupils are proud to represent their school at a range of competitions during the school year. Teachers benefit from the opportunity to work alongside specialist coaches to hone their skills.
- The teacher in charge of special educational needs and disabilities makes sure that any emerging difficulties are quickly identified and support is put in place promptly so that pupils do not fall behind. The teacher in charge works closely with the pastoral lead as well as other professionals, so that the school provides individual packages of support for pupils, whatever their needs. Pupils' work and the school's own tracking data testify to the excellent progress made by this group of pupils.
- The school's work to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Pupils recently took part in a moving tribute to the soldiers who lost their lives in the two world wars. Pupils have increased their understanding of British values through the whole-school 'Face Values' project. Each class designed and made a face of modern Britain, for example a lion, symbol not only of our national cricket and football teams but also of the English throne, and a police officer, reflecting the country we live in today.
- The curriculum does not have enough opportunities for pupils to learn about others who have different backgrounds, cultures and faiths or to learn about the diverse range of family structures that exist in our country.

Governance of the school

- Governors provide highly effective challenge and support to the headteacher and senior leaders. Governors regularly review their skills, expertise and experience to ensure that they have the right balance to provide effective strategic leadership for the school.
- Governors use information from a range of sources to make sure that they have an accurate view of the school. Regular visits provide opportunities for governors to see, at first hand, the work of the school. Consequently, governors are able to support and challenge leaders effectively.
- Governors make sure that finances are used to good effect. Governors recognised the pressing need to address inequalities between different groups of pupils as early as possible. Therefore, they prioritised the allocation of additional funding to early years to make the necessary improvements to provision. This has made a positive difference to outcomes for the youngest children, particularly boys and disadvantaged children.
- Governors recognise that while the school has done much to prepare its pupils for life

in modern Britain, pupils do not yet have a fully developed understanding of the role played by people from different faiths and cultures in shaping the country we live in today.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders make safeguarding a high priority. Staff regularly attend training and understand their roles and responsibilities well. Staff are encouraged to share their ideas to make safeguarding systems and procedures more effective. For example, staff recently redesigned the form used to report safeguarding concerns, so that it included all the information they felt necessary when making a referral to senior colleagues. The school carries out thorough checks to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children. The school has gone to great lengths to address concerns raised about behaviour of a small minority of older pupils. Pupils who spoke to inspectors were very positive about the transformation that the measures, put in place by leaders, have made. Pupils appreciate the vigilance of staff and feel exceptionally safe and well cared for. Parents testify to the school's willingness to go the extra mile when pupils need additional help and support.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers have the highest possible expectations of pupils. Teachers make sure no time is wasted in lessons. Teachers make sure that they regularly assess pupils' learning, using this information to plan lessons that continually move pupils' learning on, deepening their understanding. As a result, pupils make strong progress across all subjects and year groups.
- Teachers apply the school's marking policy consistently. Pupils value the feedback their teachers give them to help improve their work.
- Teachers have a comprehensive understanding of the pupils in their classes. Teachers use the information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses well. They leave nothing to chance. In a class where boys had not performed as strongly as girls in reading, the previous year, the teacher made sure that there were more books which would appeal to boys, displayed in the book corner. This encouraged the boys to read more often.
- Teachers plan lessons that engage and enthuse pupils. They set tasks that encourage pupils to work things out for themselves. Teachers make sure that classrooms are well resourced; pupils make very good use of the guidance included in wall displays to help them with their work.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They make good use of the recently refurbished school library as well as the inviting book areas in their classrooms. Pupils look forward to hearing their teachers read the next instalment of their class book each day. The most able pupils read with fluency and expression. High-quality reading lessons help pupils to develop excellent comprehension skills.
- Pupils have confidence in their teachers. They know that if they are struggling with any aspect of their learning, their teachers will step in quickly to help them. Pupils told inspectors that their teachers are very good at explaining things to them.
- Pupils relish the challenges set by their teachers. They apply themselves well to tricky problems and love learning. For example, in mathematics, younger pupils enjoyed

finding different ways to make 17. Pupils worked well with their partners, discussing and debating the possible solutions, confidently using a range of apparatus to help them.

- The highly effective subject leaders provide excellent support to their colleagues and ensure that teachers are constantly deepening their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. More experienced colleagues provide support to teachers in the early stages of their careers, which enables them to hone their craft quickly.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work seamlessly together. Together, they help pupils falling behind to catch up and move the 'quick graspers' on to new learning. As a result, pupils make strong progress and a high proportion of pupils are now working at standards above those expected for their age.
- Parents are kept up to date with their children's learning formally and informally. On a daily basis, teachers record the positive learning behaviours pupils have shown, as well as posting photographs and videos that parents can access securely online. On a weekly basis, parents can find out what their children have been learning through the class 'blogs'. Each term there are formal parents' meetings. Parents appreciate the regular updates about their children's progress as well as the school's willingness to meet with them at other times, if they have any concerns.
- Teachers work together to ensure that their assessments are accurate. Regular in-house moderation, as well as joint moderation with a local primary school, helps teachers to fine-tune their assessments. Work scrutiny by leaders and external checks by the local authority give the headteacher and governors confidence in the reliability of the information about pupils' progress provided by teachers.
- The arrangements leaders have put in place for the oldest pupils have ensured that pupils have got off to a flying start in their final year at Grange Valley. Pupils talked positively to inspectors about how the early transition into Year 6 smaller groups for reading, writing and mathematics, and high-quality teaching have made a positive difference to pupils' attitudes to learning as well as their behaviour. Pupils relish the challenges their teachers set them, take great pride in their work and enjoy taking on different responsibilities across school. Consequently, this year group are on track to achieve highly and be well prepared for secondary school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for learning permeates the school. Pupils take great pride in their work; their handwriting is of a high standard.
- Pupils are articulate and confident. They are at ease when talking about their work and are refreshingly honest and insightful about aspects of their work that need improvement. They provide encouragement to their classmates; they recognise and celebrate each other's strengths.
- Pupils take their responsibilities seriously. For example, pupils in charge of the healthy tuck shop make sure that they keep an eye on the stock levels, take charge of placing

orders and run the shop each day. Older pupils take good care of younger pupils. This caring attitude was illustrated when a group of older pupils realised that younger pupils did not know how to skip, so they made sure that they took the time to teach them.

- Pupils appreciate the wealth of training they have to help them know how to stay safe. Every year all pupils take part in the 'Speak out. Stay safe.' programme run by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). The school also takes part in the national anti-bullying week and provides regular reminders to pupils about how to keep safe online. Key messages on mouse mats and eye-catching displays make sure that pupils are constantly reminded of the safety rules they need to follow. Those pupils who spoke to inspectors were confident that they know how to keep themselves safe in the community and online.
- The school helps pupils to make healthy choices. The wealth of toys and games available at lunchtimes, clubs including dance, gymnastics and football, and high-quality PE lessons keep pupils active. Last term, the school council took a radical approach to improving the lunchtime menu. They held a competition for parents to come up with new recipes for school lunches. The winning recipe is to be included in the menu later this term.
- Pupils are keen to help those less fortunate than themselves. For example, pupils enthusiastically raise money for charity and through their fund-raising have provided a defibrillator for the school, and paid for training on its use for staff, parents, governors and pupils.
- Pupils enjoyed the talks given by people about their different careers, including a doctor and pilot. Pupils are encouraged to aim high and work hard to realise their ambitions. In this way, the school helps pupils to understand the wide range of exciting opportunities available in their future lives.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their excellent attendance. Pupils understand the importance of coming to school, on time, every day and classes are keen to win the school's attendance cup. The attendance officer and pastoral lead provide support to the very small number of families who struggle to get their children to school on time every day. As a result, attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and all groups of pupils attend equally well.
- All staff set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. In lessons and around school the behaviour of the overwhelming majority of pupils is exemplary. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and other pupils, ensuring that no time is wasted in lessons; this contributes to their strong progress. Pupils move around school in a calm and orderly fashion. They wear their uniforms with pride, keen to lend a hand and speak politely to staff, visitors and each other.
- The school supports a very small number of pupils with challenging behaviour. The high-quality provision offered by the pastoral lead, strong partnerships with specialist support services and excellent classroom management by teaching staff have helped all of these pupils to improve their behaviour significantly.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- As the most able pupils move into Year 1 at or above the expected standard, leaders ensure that momentum is not lost as the pupils move through school. At every stage, pupils, including the most able, make strong progress and the proportions of pupils achieving at least the expected standard for their age is well above the national average.
- Pupils' work in books, learning in lessons, the school's own assessment and tracking information and 2016 test results are all testament to the school's successful drive to keep standards rising. Pupils quickly secure their basic skills, and the proportion of pupils working at greater depth and reaching high standards continues to increase.
- Pupils in key stage 1 build on the firm foundations laid in early years to quickly secure their phonic knowledge. This ensures that the proportions of pupils meeting the expected standard in phonics are above the national average. Leaders closely track the impact of additional support to help those pupils who do not meet the standard to catch up quickly.
- By the end of key stage 1, from their different starting points, pupils make strong progress. High-quality teaching and timely support ensure that almost all pupils reach the expected standard by the end of Year 6.
- The investment in the class and school libraries has inspired pupils to read widely and often. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the authors and types of books they enjoy reading. The daily reading comprehension and weekly reading lessons help pupils to develop the skills needed to access more ambitious texts. Consequently, reading is one of the strengths of the school.
- Across the curriculum pupils achieve well. The overwhelming majority of pupils are at or above the expected standard in subjects other than English and mathematics. Excellent subject leadership, together with a well-considered curriculum and first-rate staff development, lead to pupils receiving high-quality teaching. This underpins their strong progress in all subjects, including history, computing and science.
- The school has identified its most-able pupils as well as those pupils who have the potential to reach the higher standards. Teachers have reviewed their planning to make sure that they create more opportunities to challenge this group of pupils. Recent assessments and work in pupils' books testify to the increased proportions of pupils across the school working at the higher standards. The most able pupils have responded well to the challenge, enjoying grappling with tricky problems in mathematics, planning more ambitious pieces of writing and mastering more demanding texts. As a result, more pupils are now working at greater depth in mathematics across the school.
- The comprehensive support packages school puts in place for pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities help these pupils overcome their barriers to learning. The teacher in charge of special educational needs and the pastoral lead work closely together, to make certain that these pupils achieve their targets and have secured firm academic foundations as they move on to the next stage, whether at Grange Valley or on to high school.
- Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress, from their different starting points.

Leaders keep a close eye on this group of pupils and make sure that the additional funding is well matched to their needs. Leaders ensure that the most able disadvantaged pupils keep up with their peers with similar starting points. The increased focus on improving the performance of the most able pupils, and those pupils with the potential to achieve high standards, has made a positive difference to the achievement of these pupils.

- The success of the early years team in addressing the differing outcomes for girls and boys has helped both groups get off to a good start in key stage 1. Moreover, teachers make good use of the comprehensive information they receive at the start of the academic year to make sure that they address any inequalities between groups. As a result, both girls and boys achieve well across the school.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The teacher in charge of early years is an inspiration to her team. The teacher in charge and her colleagues have worked hard to transform the quality of provision for the school's youngest children.
- Children get off to a flying start. Staff make sure that they get to know children before they join the Nursery, so that they can help children settle in quickly. Staff encourage children to develop independence in those early days, so that children are quickly able to make the most of their learning time. Within a few weeks of starting Nursery, children are confidently and competently dressing ready for the winter weather, so that they can enjoy the outdoor area.
- Staff use a wealth of information to assess each child's learning and identify their next steps. To make sure that they make the most of every opportunity to move children's learning on, staff carry with them a list so that they can check any child's targets, at any time. Staff use this information well to inform their interactions with children and assess their learning. Consequently, children make rapid gains in their knowledge and skills, catching up quickly from their different starting points.
- The teacher in charge of early years has been resolute in her determination that every child should leave early years with a good level of development. She has ensured that the funding for disadvantaged pupils has been put to good use. The appointment of an additional member of staff has built the team's capacity to work intensively with the children to develop their communication and language skills. This approach is paying dividends, not only for disadvantaged pupils but also for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Children are passionate about learning to read. They enjoy their daily phonics sessions. During the inspection, children were finding words that began with the sound 'c', as at the beginning of 'cat'. Pupils delighted in suggesting interesting words and phrases such as 'caterpillar' and 'clacking castanets'.
- Early years is a hive of activity in which children are absorbed in their learning. During a typical session, a small group of children were enthusiastically sharing their ideas about how they might stop a block of ice melting; another group were designing a 'wanted poster' for their class 'rainbow fish' who had gone missing; while a group of boys, huddled in a den, were enjoying writing. Children look forward to reading the

'floor books', made by the staff with some help from the children, which celebrate children's learning across the week.

- Parents are encouraged to be partners in their children's learning. They are invited to regular 'stay and play' sessions, share their child's 'wow' moments at home with staff and follow the early years 'blog'. Parents are encouraged to get to know other parents and get involved in school life through the 'Fun Friday' sessions run by the school's pastoral lead.
- Parents hold the setting in high regard. They are delighted with how well their children settle in and how much they look forward to each day. Parents are amazed by the progress their children are making.
- The team have recently earned a local award for their work in improving the health and well-being of their children and their families. Staff are highly vigilant, making sure children are safe and well cared for. The teacher in charge of early years ensures that statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	104774
Local authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	10002874

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Rouch
Headteacher	Dianne Holcroft
Telephone number	017446 78300
Website	www.grangevalley.st-helens.sch.uk
Email address	dianne.holcroft@sthelens.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 November 2011

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.

- The headteacher took up post in January 2013.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected nationally for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school, including joint observations and short visits to lessons with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, other members of staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, school improvement planning and assessment information.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally during the school day and observed them during playtime and lunch. They also met formally with two groups of pupils to talk about their learning, behaviour and safety. There were no responses received to the inspection questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors heard a number of pupils read.
- Inspectors took note of displays around the school.
- Inspectors checked a range of pupils' books.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents during the inspection and considered the 67 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of staff and also considered the 15 responses they received to the inspection questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Maureen Hints	Ofsted Inspector
Diane Palin	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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