

Inspection of Astmoor Primary School

Kingshead Close, Castlefields, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2JE

Inspection dates: 17–18 September 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring and nurturing school. The values of 'respect, readiness and safety' are threaded through all aspects of the school. Pupils do their very best to live up to these values. Staff have high expectations for all pupils. They expect pupils to work hard.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. Those we spoke with said that behaviour is good and bullying is rare. Should bullying happen, staff deal with it quickly. Some pupils, reflecting the views of others, said that there is always someone to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. Playtimes are calm and well supervised by staff. Pupils have access to a wide range of activities at lunchtime. In the dining hall, pupils chat happily with their friends while collecting their healthy lunch. Pupils told inspectors that they like coming to school.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development well. They give pupils positions of responsibility. For example, some are members of the school council. This helps them to understand how to make a positive contribution to society in the future. Pupils are proud about the well-developed link with a school in South Africa.

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

Leaders have carefully designed the curriculum and there are many strengths across subjects. Leaders have identified the knowledge that they want pupils to gain in each topic. They make sure that curriculum plans contain what pupils need to know and when. Teachers work with other colleagues to share ideas and expertise. Staff have the knowledge and skills to help pupils learn well.

Governors are clear on their roles. They provide challenge and support for leaders. This contributes to the well-organised learning in school. The staff I talked with told me how proud they are to be part of the school. They also said leaders are considerate about staff workload.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well met. Teachers adapt their plans if needed. Pupils with SEND access the full curriculum. As a result, they are successful in their learning.

Teachers give pupils opportunities to think hard by enabling them to use what they know in different contexts. For example, pupils told inspectors how they used their geography, mathematics and science knowledge when learning about volcanoes. Pupils discuss confidently what they have learned in many subjects. They are able to show that they know and remember more as they progress through the curriculum. However, in history pupils do not remember what they have already learned as well as they do in other subjects. Older pupils show some understanding of the topics that they have studied but find it hard to recall learning about Britain from the Stone Age to 1066. Learning has not been as effective as it could be in history. Pupils develop their writing skills effectively. They gain a good understanding of how

to spell and use punctuation and grammar to make sure their written work is accurate. Pupils are enthusiastic writers. Their success in this subject is reflected in the outcomes of the national tests. Pupils achieve well.

The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) and reading is given high importance in the school. Pupils learn phonics in a logical order. This enables them to read simple words before they move on to develop greater fluency and comprehension. The books that children read are carefully matched to these expectations. Pupils are enthusiastic about the stories that they have listened to. They often read books for themselves by authors that teachers have introduced them to. In 2018 the percentage of Year 1 pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check was in line with the national average.

In Reception, children's early mathematics, language and communication skills develop well. Staff foster strong relationships and teach children the things that they need to know in a sensible order. Teachers provide children with opportunities to develop their new knowledge and skills in the well-resourced classroom and outdoor area. Adults keep a close check on children's progress each term. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is rising. However, it remains below the national average. As a result, some children are not ready for the Year 1 curriculum.

Pupils told inspectors that behaviour in classrooms has improved since the last inspection. They are able to complete work without disruptions. Pupils benefit from calm and warm relationships with the adults that work with them.

Pupils' personal development is strong. Pupils who spoke to us were particularly positive about the work that they do on equality. They enjoy a wide range of activities and clubs, such as choir and table tennis. The school has been successful in sporting competitions in the region.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff prioritise safeguarding. Training for staff helps them to understand their role in keeping pupils safe. Leaders work effectively with the local authority and other agencies. They ensure that vulnerable pupils get the help that they need quickly. The school's family support worker has developed strong links with parents. This helps pupils and their families to receive the help that they need as quickly as possible.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know that they can share any worries with any trusted adult. The curriculum helps pupils understand how to stay safe, both online and in the world outside school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders need to ensure that teachers are clear about what pupils should learn in history and when this should happen. This is so that pupils know more and remember more about the historical periods that they study.
- The improvements in the early years curriculum have resulted in an increase in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development from low starting points. However, leaders should further develop the current strong practice in early years to ensure that more pupils are ready for the demands of the Year 1 curriculum.

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're 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

Unique reference number	111217
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10087832
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	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Colin Lloyd
Headteacher	Louisa Aldridge
Website	www.astmoorprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 March 2017

Information about this school

- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding is significantly above average.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. We spoke with members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and members of staff.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including information about attendance, safeguarding and checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- We considered five responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View; seven responses from the online staff survey; and 34 responses to the pupil survey.
- We focused deeply on reading, writing and history during the inspection. We held discussions with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, met with teachers and spoke with pupils.

Inspection team

Simon Hunter, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jennie Platt

Ofsted Inspector

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