

Inspection of Over Hall Community School

Ludlow Close, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 1LX

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this school. They feel happy and safe. Pupils trust that if they have any worries, adults in school will do their best to help them.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are well supported with their emotions and behaviour. Pupils behave well. They said that bullying hardly ever happens, but that when it does, staff will sort it out quickly. Pupils appreciate using 'the blue room' to be able to talk about their feelings to an adult. They also enjoy the responsibility of caring for the school pets, Noah, Albie and Linda.

Pupils get on well together at playtimes. They said that doing Tai Chi at the end of playtime helps them to be calm and ready for learning. Pupils have lots of opportunities to contribute to their community through charity work. They also participate in sporting competitions and musical performances with other local schools.

Although leaders want the best for pupils, some pupils do not achieve well. Some pupils have not been taught to read well enough. This hinders them from learning as well as they should across the whole curriculum.

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

Leaders and governors have acted to address the decline in pupils' achievement that followed the previous inspection. However, many of these improvements are still in the early stages of development.

Leaders have taken steps to improve the early reading curriculum. However, they have been less successful in ensuring that it is delivered consistently well, including in the Reception Year. Some staff have not been trained to deliver the early reading curriculum effectively. Added to this, leaders do not check well enough on whether pupils have learned the sounds that they should know. When some pupils do fall behind, leaders do not provide appropriate support to enable them to catch up quickly. The books that some pupils use to practise their reading are sometimes not matched precisely to the sounds that they have learned. Occasionally, books are too difficult for pupils. This knocks their confidence. As a result, too few pupils become fluent and accurate readers by the end of Year 2.

Leaders have based the new English curriculum around high-quality literature. It is carefully planned and ambitious and places a strong focus on supporting pupils' vocabulary. Older pupils enjoy the books that staff read to them. Pupils also appreciate the appealing selection of books in their class libraries. Most pupils in key stage 2 enjoy reading independently, but some lack confidence in their ability. These pupils did not benefit from an early reading curriculum that was planned and delivered well.

Across subjects, leaders have recently introduced a curriculum that is suitably broad and ambitious for all pupils, including for pupils with SEND. Subject leaders have identified the important knowledge that they want pupils, including children in the early years, to learn. They have ordered this knowledge carefully so that pupils can build on earlier learning.

Staff in the Reception class help children to learn to count and recognise sounds and letters from the start. However, there are times when staff in the early years do not design learning that helps children to know and remember the intended curriculum. In contrast, across the rest of the school, most subject leaders provide guidance for teachers so that they can design learning well. For instance, in mathematics leaders support teachers to adopt a consistent approach to the teaching of calculations. That said, some subject leaders do not support teachers well enough to check whether pupils know and remember the intended curriculum. This means that gaps in pupils' prior knowledge, including some misconceptions, are not addressed effectively by teachers.

Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified. Teachers receive effective guidance that helps them to support this group of pupils to know and remember important knowledge.

Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. Leaders have made sure that staff are trained appropriately to deal with any challenging behaviour in a sensitive and constructive way. This helps to minimise any disruption to pupils' learning.

Leaders prioritise the personal development of pupils. They have worked effectively to create an attractive and positive learning environment. The well-designed curriculum in personal, social and health education (PSHE) helps pupils to understand the world in which they live. For example, through PSHE lessons and assemblies, leaders ensure that pupils learn about different faiths such as Hinduism and Islam.

Members of the governing body are highly involved in the life of the school. They are proud of the work of the staff to support vulnerable pupils and their families. However, in the past, they have not held leaders to account for the quality of education sufficiently well. More recently, governors are ensuring that leaders have the expertise and skills necessary to address the weaknesses in the curriculum.

Staff appreciate that governors and leaders are considerate of their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all staff are trained to recognise the potential signs that a child may be at risk from harm. The members of the pastoral team work well

together to identify those pupils who may need support. Leaders have established strong links with other agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families get the support that they need.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe online. Visitors to the school, such as the police and the fire service, help pupils to understand how to stay safe in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that the early reading programme is delivered effectively. This has resulted in many pupils being unable to read fluently enough by the end of Year 2. This affects how well pupils achieve across subjects. Leaders must ensure that all staff are suitably trained to deliver the phonics programme and that staff identify those pupils who fall behind in their reading to ensure they can access support to catch up quickly.
- Some subject leaders do not support teachers effectively in order to check whether pupils know and remember the intended curriculum. This means that gaps in pupils' prior knowledge, including misconceptions, sometimes go unaddressed by teachers. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders are suitably trained to ensure that, from the Reception class to Year 6, teachers check effectively how well pupils know and remember the knowledge that they need for future learning.
- In the early years, there are times when staff plan learning that does not help children to know and remember the intended curriculum. This prevents some children from getting off to a strong start in their education, particularly in terms of communication and language. Leaders should ensure that staff in the early years design learning that enables children to learn and remember the knowledge that they need.

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.

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

Unique reference number	140097
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10199695
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Vera Farrow
Headteacher	Claire Edgeley
Website	www.overhall.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 March 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a stand-alone academy.
- There have been considerable changes to staffing since the school's previous inspection.
- The school makes no use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other members of staff, with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school, and with parents and carers. Inspectors met with a group of trustees and had

telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and an independent school improvement partner.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding, including the checks undertaken by leaders when recruiting staff.
- Inspectors considered the 24 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, the 19 responses to Ofsted’s online survey for staff, and the 57 responses to Ofsted’s online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, religious education and PSHE. This included discussions with subject leaders; visits to lessons; reviewing pupil’s work; discussions with teachers; and discussions with pupils. The lead inspector also observed pupils reading to a trusted adult.

Inspection team

Janette Walker, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Elizabeth Clarke

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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