

Inspection of a good school: Overchurch Infant School

Moreton Road, Upton, Wirral, Merseyside CH49 4NS

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 November 2021

Outcome

Overchurch Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are full of joy and enthusiasm for learning. Pupils said that they love being in school because they 'do amazing work' and 'play together with all our friends'. The school is welcoming and supportive of all pupils and their families. Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and work. They build on pupils' knowledge and nurture their talents. All pupils thrive, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff help each pupil to feel good about themselves and achieve the best they can.

Pupils know the school's golden rules: to be kind, work hard and never give up. Everyone plays their part in upholding these. Children in early years are curious and keen to learn. Pupils are attentive and work together well in lessons as they get older. The encouraging atmosphere helps pupils to grow in confidence. Older pupils are self-assured and talk about their learning eagerly.

Pupils are kind and considerate towards each other around the school. Pupils said that the school is a safe place and that they feel safe. They know that they can talk to adults about any concerns. Leaders deal with any incidents of inappropriate behaviour or bullying quickly and fairly.

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

Leaders and governors have developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. The curriculum is planned well. It develops pupils' knowledge sequentially in each subject. It succeeds in building pupils' vocabulary from the start in early years. This enables pupils to achieve well. That said, some small aspects of the curriculum are not as clearly defined. For example, pupils' fluency in writing is not as well developed as it could be. This sometimes hampers pupils' work across the broad curriculum as they get older.

Teachers follow curriculum plans closely. They plan activities that interest pupils and spark their imagination. Learning proceeds smoothly, as there is rarely any disruptive behaviour. Teachers assess pupils' knowledge and understanding thoroughly. They plan teaching that

is pitched at just the right level to build on pupils' knowledge. Consequently, pupils of all abilities achieve well. In early years, the carefully planned curriculum ensures that all areas of learning are promoted well in class and in the exciting outdoor areas. Children are prepared well for Year 1. As pupils move through Year 1 and Year 2, they build on their knowledge successfully as they progress through the ambitious curriculum.

Staff promote pupils' reading skills effectively. Pupils' phonics knowledge is developed systematically from the Nursery class onwards. Their early reading books are matched closely to the phonics that they are learning. Pupils are able to apply their knowledge and read unseen books with success.

As pupils become more fluent readers, they enjoy choosing from a wide range of books. Teachers read good-quality books to pupils, to promote a love of reading and to support learning across the curriculum. Pupils are motivated by the stories that they hear. In the Nursery class, for example, children devised a trail in the school's forest area, after enjoying stories in class. Year 2 pupils eagerly followed a storybook character's journey across the world. They located the countries and continents he visited on a world map.

Pupils who have gaps in their knowledge are supported effectively. In mathematics, for example, pupils who have fallen behind have targeted teaching in a smaller group. This helps them to secure essential knowledge and to move forward successfully. The well-planned activities build pupils' confidence and help them to catch up. In phonics, pupils have additional, precise teaching, which addresses gaps in their learning.

The school's provision for pupils with SEND is a strength. Leaders and teachers identify pupils' needs early. They do everything possible to help pupils with SEND access a rich curriculum. Leaders draw on a range of external support if pupils need more support.

The school's work to promote pupils' wider development is of a high quality. The books that teachers read to children raise their awareness of diverse cultures and celebrate differences. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is promoted successfully across the curriculum and in daily discussions. Pupils are inspired by the 'Overchurch Heroes' they have created. They talked with understanding about positive character traits, such as respect, friendship, equality and courage.

All staff are highly enthusiastic about their work. They support each other and work together constructively. Staff feel valued and inspired by leaders. They believe that leaders and governors are mindful of their well-being. They said that their workload is manageable. Parents and carers are also highly positive about the school. They said, for example, 'staff are kind, caring and enthusiastic,' and, 'my child is thriving'. This inspection supports their positive views.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff have completed relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities. They are vigilant in identifying risks and any safeguarding concerns. Staff keep meticulous records.

The knowledgeable safeguarding team analyses the records thoroughly. Leaders act quickly to help vulnerable pupils and their families. They maintain pupils' high attendance. They draw on external support to get the right help to pupils and families. The curriculum teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe and about healthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although almost all aspects of the curriculum are well developed, the plans for writing are less clear. This means that teachers are not helping some pupils to become fluent writers. At times, this hampers pupils' work across other curriculum areas. Leaders and teachers should review their curriculum plans to ensure that pupils build their stamina and fluency in writing as they progress through the school.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2010.

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	105043
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10199586
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mike Larsen
Headteacher	Steve Elliott
Website	www.overchurchinfantschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 January 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation.

- The inspector met with the headteacher and the senior leadership team, comprising the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the leader for English and the early years leader. She met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. She spoke with a local authority representative.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector looked at curriculum plans and sampled pupils' work in other subjects. She spoke with pupils about their learning across the curriculum.
- The inspector looked closely at safeguarding. This included a scrutiny of policies, records, training, behaviour and safeguarding logs, and the school's checks on staff. She spoke with pupils and took account of their views. She met with leaders responsible for safeguarding and talked with staff. Throughout the inspection, the inspector checked adults' knowledge and understanding of their duties to keep pupils safe.
- The inspector looked at pupils' behaviour and their wider development. She observed behaviour in lessons, outside and in shared areas and talked to pupils about their experiences in school. The inspector considered the views of the parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View.
- The inspector considered the workload and well-being of school staff. She spoke with teachers, some teaching assistants and some midday assistants, and took account of the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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