

Inspection of Four Oaks Primary School

39 Davy Street, Liverpool, Merseyside L5 1XP

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 February 2022

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

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a calm and welcoming place where pupils enjoy learning. Pupils behave well. They take pride in their work and their achievements.

Pupils at this school celebrate diversity. They were keen to show inspectors the many different countries represented within their school community. They enjoy exploring different religions and cultures. Pupils are respectful towards each other and staff.

Pupils are happy and safe in school. They enjoy social times. Staff take good care of pupils, including children in the early years. Pupils trust adults to sort out any problems that might occur on the playground or in class.

Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare. Some parents and carers do not agree with this. However, inspectors found that incidents affecting pupils, including those involving bullying, are fully investigated and addressed by leaders.

Leaders want pupils to achieve well. They have improved the curriculum to enable this to happen. As a result, pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve better than they did in the past. However, due to the previous poor-quality curriculum, some pupils in key stage 2 have considerable gaps in their learning. This means that they do not achieve as well as they should.

In the early years, the curriculum is underdeveloped. Leaders do not ensure that children in the early years learn as much as they should. This is especially true for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked alongside external consultants to develop a new and more ambitious curriculum. In key stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is now well organised in all subjects. Leaders have ensured that teachers know the essential content that pupils are expected to learn. Teachers also know in what order this new knowledge must be taught. Leaders' improvements to curriculum planning in key stage 1 are increasing pupils' motivation to learn. However, in key stage 2, pupils remain behind in their learning due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the previously weak curriculum.

Teachers are using assessment strategies with increasing effect to address pupils' misconceptions. Added to this, teachers are also addressing the learning that pupils have missed or forgotten as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this work is at the early stages of development. Although pupils are beginning to build up a richer bank of knowledge, their recall of prior learning is fragile. This makes learning new facts or concepts more difficult for pupils, especially those in key stage 2 and those with SEND.

In the early years, leaders do not ensure that some children are fully prepared for Year 1. Leaders have not defined exactly what children need to know in each area of learning. Consequently, leaders do not provide sufficient guidance and support to staff or children. This results in some adults not focusing sufficiently well on what children need to know and be able to do. On occasions, a few children in the early years lose interest in their learning as a result of a curriculum that is not sufficiently well planned and delivered.

Leaders make effective use of a range of resources to identify pupils with SEND. They also identify and support those pupils who are behind in their development because they are still learning to speak English as an additional language. Leaders access an appropriate range of multi-agency support. However, leaders do not ensure that teachers make effective use of the advice and guidance given to them. This hinders how well teachers meet the needs of pupils, and children in the early years, with SEND.

Most children begin to build up secure phonics knowledge in the Reception Year. This successfully continues into key stage 1. Pupils who need to catch up with their reading knowledge higher up the school receive appropriate support.

Staff are well trained to help pupils to learn to read. They follow the school's agreed phonics programme diligently. Pupils enjoy reading books matched to the sounds that they know until they are fluent and accurate readers. Older pupils relish having time to read the carefully chosen and high-quality books that are in their classrooms. Pupils' strong reading knowledge is helping pupils in key stages 1 and 2 to access the newly refreshed curriculum.

Pupils listen respectfully in lessons and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. However, a small number of pupils, and children in the early years, do not attend school as regularly as they should. Leaders are in the process of addressing this issue.

Leaders provide high-quality opportunities for pupils' wider development. Pupils develop new interests and talents through the clubs on offer. They learn about the values of democracy and equality. Pupils benefit from thoughtfully chosen books and resources that broaden their understanding of how people might be different to themselves. Activities such as these help to prepare pupils for the wider world that they will experience when they are older.

Governors have invested heavily by providing additional training and support for teaching staff and leaders. This is so that they can improve the quality of education that pupils receive. However, governors have not provided enough challenge to leaders about the impact of their work. This is particularly the case for the leadership of the early years.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff know how to keep pupils safe. Staff know how to identify pupils who may be at risk of potential harm. They pass on their concerns diligently to the personnel responsible for safeguarding. Leaders make effective use of external support to protect pupils from harm when this is needed.

Leaders have ensured that there are secure systems in place to ensure that information relating to the safeguarding of pupils is recorded effectively. Some of these systems have recently been upgraded. Staff are still developing the confidence to use these systems. Some minor issues with safeguarding records were rectified during the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' learning has been hampered by a previously poorly planned curriculum. As a result, pupils struggle to recall important knowledge and they have gaps in their learning, particularly in key stage 2. Leaders should embed their new curriculum across the school and ensure that it is delivered well by teachers. This is to ensure that pupils retain the essential knowledge that they need for the next stages of their education.
- Leaders have not defined what children need to know in each area of the early years curriculum. Consequently, adults do not provide sufficient support to help children to build up the knowledge that they need to achieve well. As a result, a few children become disengaged in their learning. Leaders need to finalise their curriculum planning in the early years. This is so that adults know exactly what knowledge to teach children in preparation for the demands of the Year 1 curriculum.
- Leaders do not ensure that staff make effective use of the information that they receive about how to support children and pupils with SEND. As a result, some children and pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that staff know how to use the information that they receive about pupils with SEND to enable them to achieve consistently well across the curriculum.
- Governors do not challenge leaders effectively enough about the impact of their actions to improve the quality of education, including in the early years. As a result, children and pupils do not learn as well as they should. Governors need to hone their skills in checking the impact of leaders' work. They need to ensure that all pupils benefit from a high-quality education, especially children in the early years.

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	131313
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10200802
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	365
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nikki Smith
Headteacher	Sara Robinson
Website	www.fouroaksprimary.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	30 and 31 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The leadership team has been restructured since the previous inspection. Four new assistant headteachers have been appointed.
- A large proportion of pupils have lived in other countries before they began at the school. Many pupils speak English as an additional language
- The school makes use of one alternative provider.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school, including leaders for SEND. Inspectors spoke with a group of governors, including the chair of governors.

- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation relating to safeguarding. This included: the school’s central record of staff and visitors; staff’s training records; records of safeguarding; and samples of the records kept on individual pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, art and design, history and religious education. They talked with the curriculum leaders of these subject areas. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils’ work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. Inspectors looked at the curriculum plans and samples of work from other areas of the curriculum.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They observed pupils’ behaviour as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the free-text responses from parents to find out their views of the school.
- There were no responses to Ofsted’s staff or pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Bev Dolman

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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