

Inspection of a good school: Nether Alderley Primary School

Bradford Lane, Nether Alderley, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 4TR

Inspection date: 1 March 2022

Outcome

Nether Alderley Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils told inspectors that they feel well looked after and safe at this school. Pupils explained that they can trust adults to help them with any problems that they may have.

Pupils know the high expectations that adults have of them. They understand that their teachers want them to work hard. Most pupils put their best efforts into their work. As a result, they achieve well in their learning across most of the curriculum.

Pupils are happy. They recognise that they must behave well. Most pupils across the school, including children in early years, show this in their lessons and at playtimes. Pupils said that there is not much bullying. Teachers are good at dealing with it, if it does happen.

Pupils enjoy many different experiences in addition to their learning in the classroom. Pupils take part in many clubs, such as the 'fun with food' cookery club, and football and sewing clubs. Pupils said that they enjoy coming to school because they do not just learn about curriculum subjects. They also learn about important values, such as honesty, manners and respect. Pupils explained that they appreciate the 'star awards' that leaders give them when they demonstrate any of these values.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that, for the most part, sets out clearly what pupils will learn and in what order. It meets pupils' needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum is ambitious and covers a wide range of subjects that match the breadth of the national curriculum. Teachers have effective ways to assess whether pupils have understood what they have learned. Leaders provide training and support to keep teachers' knowledge up to date. This ensures that teachers know their subjects well and clearly explain to pupils what they need to know. Consequently, the curriculum is successfully delivered.

Leaders have made reading a high priority. They recognise how important it is for pupils to learn phonics well. Leaders have an effective phonics and reading curriculum in place. Children in Reception Year begin to learn phonics very soon after they start school. Most children remember the phonics that they have learned and can use their knowledge to read simple words. Some can read whole sentences. As pupils progress through key stage 1 and key stage 2, the large majority of them, including those with SEND, become fluent and accurate readers. Teachers provide extra sessions for pupils to catch up in their learning if they need to do so.

Although most pupils achieve well in reading, a minority of pupils in key stage 1 who find reading difficult do not read as fluently as they should. These pupils are unsure of the sounds that they have learned and find it hard to use them to read unfamiliar words. This is because teachers have not given them enough practice to enable them to remember their phonics knowledge securely. This prevents some pupils from becoming fluent readers.

In most other subjects, leaders have clearly thought through the knowledge that they want pupils to learn and when they want pupils to learn it. Most pupils remember the knowledge that they gain and can use it in future learning. Consequently, they achieve well. In mathematics in early years, for example, most children know how to recognise numbers up to 10. This helps them with more demanding learning, such as working out the difference between two numbers. However, in a few subjects, such as history and art and design, leaders have not organised the curriculum carefully enough. Pupils are sometimes unclear about how their learning fits with other knowledge that they have been taught. As a result, pupils do not build up their knowledge as securely as possible.

Leaders have effective systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders have a variety of ways to enable pupils to access the curriculum successfully. The support that these pupils receive helps them to learn well.

Most pupils behave well in class and take their learning seriously. There is very little misbehaviour that gets in the way of teaching the curriculum. Staff have effective ways to manage pupils' behaviour when they need to do so.

There is a wide range of activities for pupils in order to ensure that there is more to the curriculum than academic subjects. Leaders organise visits to deepen pupils' learning. Pupils can also take on a role of responsibility, such as house captain or school councillor.

Staff said that leaders are approachable and supportive of their welfare and workload. Those responsible for governance have a secure understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school. They provide strong challenge to leaders and hold them to account effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have robust and effective systems in place for reporting and recording safeguarding concerns. Leaders refer to the appropriate services outside school if pupils need extra help. Leaders have strong systems to ensure that they make proper checks on staff before they employ them.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding and are knowledgeable about the signs and symptoms of abuse. Adults provide pupils with useful information about how to keep themselves safe from harm. For example, pupils know about the risks involved in using the internet. Pupils are confident to report any worries that they may have to members of staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few low-attaining readers in key stage 1 cannot apply the phonemes that they have learned to unfamiliar texts. This is because they have not had enough practice to make sure that they have fully learned them. As a result, these pupils cannot read fluently enough. Leaders must ensure that teachers give pupils enough opportunities to develop their phonics knowledge securely, to enable them to apply it successfully to new texts.
- In a few subjects, the content and sequence of learning are not coherent enough. This means that pupils are not able to build their knowledge on what they already know. Leaders should ensure that all subjects have clearly sequenced content to enable pupils to develop their knowledge well across the whole curriculum.

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 predecessor school, Nether Alderley Primary School, to be good in March 2012.

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	141306
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10212407
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	96
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Gorton
Headteacher	Richard Craven
Website	www.netheralderley.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been several changes of staff since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and art and design. They held discussions with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils. The lead inspector heard pupils reading to familiar adults and talked to pupils about their reading. Inspectors also looked at how well the curriculum in early mathematics is delivered.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with members of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the trust.

- Inspectors reviewed the school's website and a range of school documents. These included the school's self-evaluation document, its improvement plan and various documents and records related to behaviour, safeguarding and bullying.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences in school.
- The lead inspector evaluated the responses to Ofsted Parent View. He also analysed the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Claire Hollister

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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