

# Inspection of Ashurst Primary School

New Glade Hill, Off Chain Lane, Blackbrook, St Helens, Merseyside WA11 9QJ

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Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils, parents, carers and staff are proud to be a part of this happy, caring and busy school. Children in the early years, along with any new pupils across the school, are given a warm welcome. They settle into school life quickly.

In lessons and around school, pupils behave well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils work and play well together. Any occasional arguments are sorted out quickly. Pupils trust adults to keep them safe from any harm, including from bullying. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Trips, visitors and celebrations help pupils to learn more about subjects such as history, geography and religious education. For example, children in the early years enjoyed learning about Holi recently. The oldest pupils have been finding out about the world of work and career options.

Leaders also have high expectations for pupils' academic achievement. Leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum in most subjects. This allows children in the early years to get off to a flying start. Across the rest of the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well in most subjects.

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

Leaders have developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. In most subjects, they have thought carefully about what pupils need to learn and when they should learn it. This includes for children in the early years. In most subjects, teachers plan activities that help pupils to build on what they already know and can do. Quick quizzes help teachers to check what pupils have remembered. This helps pupils, including those with SEND, to progress well through the curriculum in these subjects.

However, in a minority of subjects, leaders have not set out clearly enough what they want pupils to learn and when they should learn it. In these subjects, pupils are not easily able to recall what they have learned previously. This prevents them from applying their existing knowledge when learning about something new.

Children in the early years get off to a strong start when learning to read. These children, along with pupils in key stage 1, have regular opportunities to practise what they have learned in their daily phonics sessions. Teachers quickly put in place additional support for any children or pupils who start to fall behind. Older pupils continue to improve their reading accuracy, fluency and ability to understand what they read. Teachers make sure that pupils read a wide range of literature, including non-fiction and poetry. However, older pupils said that they miss listening to adults reading stories to them for pleasure.

Teachers are alert to identify any pupils who could potentially have SEND. They work well with parents to understand what these potential needs are. Leaders involve other professionals so that pupils' needs are quickly assessed and met. Leaders make sure that these pupils are able to access the curriculum alongside their peers. They also make sure that pupils receive any additional help and support that they may need.

The school is calm and orderly throughout the school day. The youngest children in the Nursery Year help to tidy up, take turns and share. Children in the Reception class love sharing what they admire in their classmates as part of 'pupil of the day'. Adults help pupils to manage their own behaviour well. Any disruptions to learning are rare.

Leaders have reviewed the provision for pupils' personal development in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Across school, including children in the early years, pupils are taught how to look after their physical health and mental well-being. The headteacher monitors pupils' participation in extra-curricular activities to make sure that pupils do not miss out.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They said that leaders are considerate of their well-being and workload.

Governors participate in training to help them understand and carry out their responsibilities. They keep a close eye on all aspects of leaders' work, including the use of additional funding and pupils' achievement.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff undertake regular safeguarding training. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities. All staff are trained to identify and support pupils who may experience peer-on-peer abuse.

Leaders make sure that safeguarding concerns are followed up promptly. They seek appropriate advice and guidance as required. They work well with external agencies to make sure that children and their families get the help and support that they need.

Pupils are taught about potential risks and how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the community. Pupils trust adults in school to help them if they have any worries or concerns.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not given sufficient thought to the knowledge and skills that pupils should learn and when they should learn it. Pupils therefore do not learn some of the most important knowledge and skills in sufficient depth. This means that pupils sometimes cannot recall important knowledge that they need to make sense of new learning. Leaders should further refine their curricular thinking in these subjects so that teachers are clear about what pupils need to know and remember.
- Older pupils do not often hear adults reading books aloud to them for pleasure. For some pupils, this has a negative impact on their attitude to reading. Leaders should further develop older pupils' appreciation and love of reading by providing more opportunities for adults to read books to them for pleasure.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104771
<b>Local authority</b>	St Helens
<b>Inspection number</b>	10212232
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	226
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Jacqueline Halligan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lisa Houghton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ashurstprimary.co.uk">www.ashurstprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 – 6 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The governing body runs before- and after-school provision on the school site.
- The school uses one registered 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and teaching staff. Inspectors spoke with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.

- Inspectors met with the leaders with responsibility for safeguarding. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding. They spoke with staff, parents and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at playtimes. They spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.

### **Inspection team**

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector      Her Majesty's Inspector

Joan Grant      Ofsted Inspector

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