

Inspection of Knowsley Junior School

Stoneleigh Road, Springhead, Oldham, Greater Manchester OL4 4BH

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils help to make this school the friendly place that it is. They welcome visitors and are keen to share their learning with them. Pupils are respectful towards each other and to adults. They are polite and thoughtful. Pupils behave well in lessons, at playtimes and when moving around school.

Staff have high expectations of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils try their best to meet these expectations. They are attentive in lessons. Pupils support each other well with their learning. They offer their ideas in discussions and take on board the ideas of others. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning help everyone to achieve well.

Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being members of the junior leadership team. Leaders value pupils' opinions and listen to their suggestions. This helps pupils to feel fully involved in school life. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the range of clubs and opportunities available to them. Older pupils are eagerly anticipating their forthcoming residential visit.

Pupils feel well supported and cared for by the adults in the school. They said that staff help to sort out problems well, including if bullying happens, though pupils were adamant that bullying does not occur. Pupils trust staff with their worries. They feel happy and safe at school.

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

Leaders have designed a well-thought-out curriculum that matches the ambition of the national curriculum. They have reflected carefully about how to make this curriculum meaningful and interesting to pupils. All pupils, including those with SEND, are supported well to make connections between different subjects and topics. Pupils achieve well as a result.

In some subjects, leaders have taken their curriculum thinking one stage further. They have broken down the important knowledge that pupils need to acquire into well-ordered steps. Teachers carefully introduce and frequently revisit this knowledge. They check that pupils know and can remember what they have been taught. This helps pupils to build their knowledge well over time.

The disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that some leaders have not developed their subject curriculums to this same level of detail. In some subjects, leaders have not established the order in which they want smaller components of new knowledge to be taught. They have not provided teachers with the guidance that they need to enable them to build on pupils' learning across key stage 2. However, leaders are well on their way to ensuring that these curriculums are finalised within the next year.

In subjects where the curriculum is still under development, leaders' approaches to assessment are also in the early stages. As a result, teachers' checks on what pupils know and can remember are not as effective as they should be. This means that in these subjects, pupils' learning is uneven.

Leaders ensure that all pupils leave the school in Year 6 being able to read, write and communicate well. Pupils read widely and often. They are confident and enthusiastic readers. Pupils make ambitious vocabulary choices when writing. They use a wide range of punctuation accurately. Pupils demonstrate well developed spoken language. They listen carefully to the viewpoints of others and justify their own responses well.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted pupils' learning. Some pupils in Years 3 and 4 have missing phonics knowledge. This affects their ability to read fluently. Leaders have taken effective action to address these knowledge deficits. They have ensured that pupils who need help to catch-up benefit from daily phonics sessions. Leaders have trained staff to deliver these sessions well. They have invested in books that match the sounds that these pupils are learning or already know. This is helping pupils to catch-up quickly.

Leaders have carefully considered how best to prepare pupils for their future lives. Leaders identify pupils with SEND accurately. They ensure that staff meet the needs of pupils who are disadvantaged, or those with SEND, successfully.

Pupils are taught to respectfully consider moral issues. They embrace difference. Pupils spoke positively and sensitively about different kinds of families. They also develop a strong sense of their personal identity. Pupils show a mature understanding of each other. This supports pupils to behave well and focus on their learning in lessons.

The members of the leadership team are knowledgeable and committed. They benefit from the informed challenge and support offered by governors. Staff, including those who are new to teaching, feel valued and well supported. They are proud to work at the school. Staff appreciate that leaders are highly considerate of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, ensure that all safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. They train staff well. Staff are vigilant and take appropriate actions to keep pupils safe.

Leaders make sure that pupils benefit from effective pastoral support. Staff know how to identify pupils who may need help with their mental or emotional health. Leaders put this support in place quickly.

Staff teach pupils how to stay safe and behave responsibly in different situations. Pupils develop a secure understanding of what is right and wrong. This includes when thinking about issues such as knife crime and substance misuse.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders are in the process of refining the sequence in which teachers deliver the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn. This means that some teachers do not enable pupils to build on their prior learning effectively enough. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking and ensure that all teachers have the information that they need to deliver the curriculum well. This will enable pupils to build a rich body of knowledge across all subjects.
- Leaders' approaches to assessment in some subjects are in the early stages. This means that teachers' checks on how well pupils have learned the curriculum are not as effective as they should be. Consequently, in these subjects, pupils' learning is uneven. Leaders should ensure that there are effective assessment systems in place that help teachers check whether pupils have learned the intended knowledge across the curriculum.
- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. Leaders need to complete the process of reviewing the curriculum in all subjects within their identified timescale. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

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	105670
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10211967
Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carol Pinnington
Headteacher	Vanessa Payne
Website	www.knowsley.oldham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Dovestone Learning Partnership.
- Leaders do not make 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with the head teacher, other school leaders and members of staff. Inspectors spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the vice-chair of the governors. Inspectors met with a representative of the local authority and the school's improvement partner.

- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers shared through Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted’s online survey for staff and Ofsted’s online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour around school, in lessons and at lunchtime. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors checked leaders’ arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They reviewed documentation and spoke to leaders and staff. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about how safe they feel in school.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss their curriculums, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. Inspectors spoke to subject leaders and looked at samples of work from other areas of the curriculum.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation shared by school leaders, including the school development plan, leaders’ self-evaluation documents and minutes of meetings of the governing body.

Inspection team

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Julie Brown

Ofsted Inspector

Chris Metcalfe

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022