

Inspection of a good school: Alderman Bolton Primary School

Longdin Street, Latchford, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 1PW

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 October 2022

Outcome

Alderman Bolton Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and children in the early years, are happy and safe in school. They value the opportunities that they have to talk with a trusted adult. Leaders have created warm and welcoming spaces where pupils can go if they have any worries or concerns. This helps to support pupils' mental health and well-being. Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging to this caring school. They wear their uniform with pride. Most pupils would readily recommend their school to others.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils rise to these expectations. They are polite and well behaved. Classrooms are calm spaces where pupils enjoy learning. Pupils learn well.

Pupils treat each other with kindness and respect. They are considerate of each other's feelings. Pupils told inspectors that staff deal with any rare bullying effectively.

The youngest children settle quickly into school routines. They develop independence and curiosity. Children in the early years communicate well.

Leaders are keen to develop and nurture pupils' interests. Pupils appreciate the many after-school activities that are offered to them, such as media club, gardening club and sports clubs.

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

Leaders and teachers are aspirational for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Leaders provide a well-designed and ambitious curriculum which gives pupils the knowledge and skills that they need to be ready for secondary school.

Leaders have carefully identified the essential knowledge that they want pupils to learn from the early years to Year 6. Teachers in each year group, in each subject, are clear

about what to teach pupils and in which order. The curriculum builds on pupils' prior learning in a logical way. This helps pupils to learn well over time.

Leaders are enthusiastic about their subjects. Senior leaders in school, and within the multi-academy trust, support staff who are new to their subject leader roles well. Subject leaders are well equipped to check that teachers are delivering the curriculum effectively.

Leaders have ensured that teachers' strong subject knowledge is enhanced through regular high-quality, subject-specific training. This helps most teachers to deliver the curriculum well. Most teachers have effective ways to assess whether pupils have understood what they have been taught over time. These teachers adapt their delivery of the curriculum to address any misconceptions or help pupils to fill gaps in their knowledge.

In many subjects, teachers give pupils, including those with SEND, frequent opportunities to secure their knowledge before moving on to more complex learning. Pupils make connections between what they have learned before and new concepts. This helps pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding in these subjects.

In a few other subjects, some teachers do not select the most appropriate activities to help pupils to secure the essential knowledge that they need to learn. Some teachers introduce new concepts before pupils are ready. This hinders how well some pupils learn in these subjects.

In the early years, teachers support children to develop their knowledge and skills well. Children are well prepared for the demands of key stage 1.

Leaders prioritise reading. The systematic teaching of phonics begins in Nursery and continues throughout key stage 1. Most children and pupils practise reading books that closely match the sounds that they know. By the end of key stage 2, the majority of pupils, including those with SEND, become fluent and accurate readers. Teachers read to pupils regularly. This helps pupils to develop a love of reading while extending their vocabulary.

Leaders accurately identify pupils' additional needs. They provide teachers with the information that they need to support pupils with SEND to learn well. Pupils, including those with SEND, respond well to their teachers. They learn without disruption.

Leaders have thought carefully about their programme for pupils' personal development. Pupils have many opportunities to deepen their understanding of democracy and how to be responsible citizens in modern Britain. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures through events such as Interfaith Week. They spoke enthusiastically about visits to places such as Delamere Forest and Beeston Castle. Year 6 pupils are looking forward to their upcoming residential experience.

The school is well led. Trustees and governors skilfully provide effective support and challenge to leaders. Staff were overwhelmingly positive about leaders' support for their workload and professional development. Staff are proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that the culture of safeguarding is strong. They carry out recruitment checks thoroughly before appointing staff. Staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training. Staff know about the potential risks that pupils may face. Staff are vigilant. They quickly identify vulnerable pupils who need extra support.

Leaders work well with other agencies. They are tenacious in securing appropriate, timely support for pupils and their families when necessary.

Pupils are confident to report any worries that they may have to members of staff. They spoke knowledgeably about keeping themselves safe online and when using mobile phones.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, some teachers do not choose activities that help pupils to secure their knowledge before moving on to new learning. This means that some pupils do not learn as well as they should in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that teachers are trained well to design learning that helps pupils to embed their knowledge before introducing new concepts.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Alderman Bolton Community Primary School, to be good in November 2016.

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.

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	145800
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10241421
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	305
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Chris Forrest
Headteacher	Paula Warding (Executive headteacher) Sarah Morris (Head of school)
Website	www.aldermanbolton.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Alderman Bolton Primary School converted to become an academy school in May 2018. When its predecessor school, Alderman Bolton Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school has nursery provision for two- and three-year-olds.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the chief executive officer of the Warrington Primary Academy Trust, the executive headteacher, the head of school, other senior leaders and a wide range of staff, including early career teachers.
- The inspector held meetings with representatives from the board of trustees and the local governing committee, including the chair of trustees.

- Deep dives were carried out in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and science. The inspector discussed the curriculum with senior leaders and subject leaders, visited lessons, considered pupils' work and talked to pupils and teachers. The inspector also listened to pupils from different age groups read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and at breaktimes. She considered pupils' views about behaviour in school. The inspector also met with groups of pupils to talk about the wider curriculum and their learning. She also spoke with staff about behaviour, their workload and well-being.
- The inspector looked at safeguarding documentation, including the single central record. She talked to staff and governors about the training they have received and considered how effective leaders' responses were to concerns raised about pupils' welfare and safety.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. The inspector also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Michelle Beard

Ofsted Inspector

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