

Inspection of Rivacre Valley Primary School

Rivacre Brow, Overpool, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH66 1LE

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and children enjoy attending Rivacre Valley Primary School. There is a warm welcome for them each morning. Staff greet pupils, parents and carers as they arrive at school.

Pupils walk into classrooms with smiles on their faces. They feel safe and well cared for by staff. Pupils know that if they have any worries, there is someone who will help them.

Pupils, including children in the early years, are polite and respectful. They are proud of their school. Pupils behave well in lessons, when moving around the school and at breaktimes. They look after each other. They trust that if bullying should happen, staff would deal with it quickly.

Leaders have high aspirations for pupils. They have designed a curriculum that motivates pupils so that they want to know more. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard. They are keen to talk about their learning. In most subjects, they have a deep knowledge of the things that they learn. Pupils progress well through the curriculum.

Children in the early years get off to a flying start. The needs and learning of children are the driving force behind the interesting activities that staff provide for them. As a result, children achieve exceptionally well. They are very well prepared for Year 1.

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

Leaders understand the needs of pupils and the community well. Leaders have developed a curriculum which provides pupils with the knowledge and skills that they need to achieve well, both academically and socially.

In most subjects, pupils build logically on what they know already. However, leaders' work to ensure that teachers are clear about the specific knowledge that pupils should learn is not complete in a small number of subjects. In these subjects, there are times when small gaps in pupils' knowledge hinder their learning of new content.

For the most part, teachers have a strong understanding of the subjects that they teach and how to deliver curriculum content. This helps them to design learning effectively, supporting pupils to deepen their understanding of subjects over time.

In the early years, children achieve very well regardless of their starting points. Staff are clear about what children should learn and when. Staff use their strong understanding of the curriculum to help children in the early years to be successful, confident learners.

Leaders have made reading a priority. Staff have been trained to deliver the reading curriculum effectively. They know what knowledge pupils need to develop as confident readers. If pupils fall behind, they are given effective support so that they catch up. Pupils, and children in the early years, enjoy the variety of rhymes, stories and books that their teachers share with them. Pupils have a love for reading and they can make recommendations about what to read to others. Leaders provide parents with useful guidance about how to help their children to read. This includes access to phonics workshops and videos on the school's website. Added to this, many parents access the school's reading caravan so that they can share more books with their children.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their peers. Staff are equipped to identify the needs of pupils with SEND in a timely manner. Leaders ensure that there is high-quality support for pupils with SEND during lessons. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Leaders have established routines which mean that school activities run smoothly. Pupils understand the school rules, follow them and consider them to be fair. Children in the early years play and learn cooperatively. Pupils work hard and take pride in their work. Lessons are rarely disrupted. Those pupils who find managing their behaviour a challenge receive individualised support from well-trained staff.

Most pupils attend school regularly. Leaders' actions to reduce pupils' rates of absence have been mostly successful. Leaders continue to work with a small number of pupils who continue to be absent from school too often. These pupils miss out on important aspects of their learning.

Teachers talk to pupils regularly about their ambitions and how to achieve them. Pupils have a variety of opportunities to develop their interests. These include sporting activities and playing musical instruments. Pupils know how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. They also learn important first-aid skills, including resuscitation.

Pupils attend regular assemblies, where they explore ideas such as tolerance and democracy. Pupils said that everyone is welcome in their school regardless of their background. However, some pupils are not as well informed about other cultures and religions.

Staff said that leaders are considerate of their well-being and workload. They spoke positively about the support they receive from leaders to carry out their roles successfully.

Governors are supportive of leaders. They know the school and its community well. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They make effective use of external partners' assessments of the school to check on the work of leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have regular training to help them spot signs which could indicate that a pupil is at risk from or suffering harm.

Leaders have a strong oversight of individual safeguarding cases. They follow up concerns tenaciously to ensure that pupils get the right support. Leaders work effectively with other agencies to provide the support that vulnerable pupils and their families need.

Leaders ensure that the school's curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn about how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils have regular lessons about online safety and learn about some of the features of healthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not ensured that teachers are clear about the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. Therefore, there are times when pupils do not acquire the knowledge that they need to build a solid foundation for subsequent learning. Leaders should ensure that, in these subjects, teachers are clear about the knowledge that pupils should learn and when this content should be delivered.
- Some aspects of the personal development curriculum are not delivered as well as they should be. This means that some pupils are not informed well about certain aspects of the wider world, such as other cultures and religions. Leaders should ensure that staff afford sufficient time and prominence to all aspects of the personal development curriculum. This will help to ensure that pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

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	130270
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10226273
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	306
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jacqui Critchley
Headteacher	Kate Docherty
Website	www.rivacrevalleyprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Rivacre Valley Primary has increased in size since the last inspection.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.
- A new chair of the governing body has recently been appointed.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 considered a range of documentation shared by leaders, including the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's self-evaluation document.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, history, geography and physical education. They considered the curriculum

documentation, met with curriculum leaders and visited lessons. They reviewed pupils' work in these subjects, as well as speaking with teachers and pupils.

- Inspectors spoke with the chair of governors and other members of the governing body. They spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders and curriculum leaders, teachers and support staff. Meetings were held with a representative of the local authority.
- To judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including safeguarding records, behaviour records, attendance records and reports from governors.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the free-text responses. Inspectors spoke with a number of parents to gather their views. Inspectors considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally during breaktimes and observed pupils playing. They collected the views of different groups of pupils and talked about their learning.

Inspection team

Keith Pullen, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Prince	Ofsted Inspector
Joan Grant	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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