

Inspection of Hale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Hesketh Road, Hale Village, Liverpool, Merseyside L24 4AN

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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 enjoy coming to school. Pupils develop strong and trusting bonds with each other and staff. They know that they can talk to any trusted adult if they are concerned or worried. This helps them to feel happy and safe. If bullying should occur, staff take immediate action and deal with it.

Staff expect pupils, and children in the early years, to behave well and achieve highly. Pupils and children respond positively to these high expectations. Most learn well in a range of different subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) also learn well.

Pupils respect and celebrate different religious and cultural traditions. They understand that people should not be discriminated against because of where they are from, what they look like or because of who they love. Pupils are active citizens. They make their views known during pupil parliament meetings. Pupils also raise money for different charities and a local food bank. They regularly sing at community events.

Pupils relish the new range of educational trips and visits available. Key stage 2 pupils were highly excited about their recent overnight stay in the Catalyst Museum, where they engaged in experiments and learned about astronomy. Year 6 pupils talked enthusiastically about their forthcoming residential trip to North Wales.

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

The new senior leadership has created a logically ordered curriculum which excites and engages pupils. They have carefully linked different topics of study to local and regional history and geography, while at the same time developing pupils' understanding of the wider world, and their place within it.

Teachers' checks on pupils' learning are effective. This helps teachers to identify where pupils are learning the curriculum securely and where pupils may have gaps in their knowledge and skills. However, in some areas of the curriculum, subject leaders are developing their expertise. The support that they give to other teachers is not as effective as it could be. As a result, in these areas, the curriculum is not implemented consistently well. In addition, in these areas, some pupils are not deepening their understanding securely.

Leaders prioritise reading. Teachers and teaching assistants deliver structured and well-organised phonics and early reading curriculums effectively. Consequently, pupils in key stage 1, and children in the Reception class, are developing their confidence and reading fluency well. Additional support is available for pupils with less secure reading skills. This helps them to catch up to their peers quickly.

Opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to practise their reading skills across the curriculum. Due to this, some pupils are not developing their reading fluency as quickly as they should. They also miss opportunities to learn even more about the subjects they are studying.

Leaders identify pupils with SEND quickly. For example, they check children's language and communication skills soon after they start in the Reception class. Leaders work closely with parents and carers, as well as external professionals when necessary. Due to this, pupils with SEND get the support that they need promptly. Staff are knowledgeable about pupils' specific needs. They ensure that pupils have access to the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils, and children in the Reception class, behave well. This was evident during the inspection when the school's gospel choir rehearsed before the whole school and parents. Pupils and children listened intently and showed their appreciation at the end of the performance. Their positive attitudes to learning ensure that low-level disruption during lessons is rare.

Leaders have created a broad personal development curriculum. Pupils enjoy participating in various clubs, including sports, craft and coding clubs. They develop their leadership skills as worship, reading and curriculum ambassadors. Older pupils enjoy mentoring their younger peers in the Reception class. Leaders enhance pupils' artistic appreciation. Recently, pupils went to see a pop-up exhibition of Vincent van Gogh's paintings.

Leaders expect pupils to aim high. For example, to heighten aspirations and raise awareness, women general practitioners, engineers and architects visited the school to talk to pupils about their work. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and how to maintain their physical and mental well-being.

Staff told inspectors that leaders are mindful of their well-being. Leaders make sure that they are not burdened with unnecessary work. Parents describe leaders as 'approachable' and the school as 'caring'. Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They know which areas of the curriculum are the strongest as well as where there is more work to be done.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors take all the necessary precautions to minimise any risks or harm to pupils. They keep close checks on pupils who may be vulnerable.

Leaders ensure that staff are aware of current developments relating to pupils' safety. They also make certain that staff are conversant with the government's latest guidelines on keeping pupils safe in education.

Staff follow the school's policies and procedures and raise concerns promptly if they are worried about pupils. Leaders work with external specialists for advice when necessary. They ensure that pupils get the help that they need promptly.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They learn about dangers and risks through different aspects of the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Opportunities for pupils to read in different subjects are not as frequent as they could be. This impedes some pupils from building confidence and fluency when reading. It also limits opportunities for pupils to gain a wider range of knowledge across the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that pupils experience a broad range of reading texts across the curriculum.
- In a few areas of the curriculum, subject leaders are developing their expertise. This restricts the quality and range of support they can offer to other teachers and contributes to variations in the way the curriculum is implemented in these subjects. Senior leaders should ensure that subject leaders have the time and support that they need to develop their skills. This will improve the quality of support that subject leaders give to teachers in these areas of the curriculum.

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	111294
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10226294
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mike Fry
Headteacher	Emma Fenton
Website	www.hale.halton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of alternative providers.
- The school is a voluntary controlled Church of England school. The last section 48 inspection was carried out on 23 June 2016.

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 that 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 held meetings with the headteacher and the assistant headteachers. Inspectors also held meetings with other leaders, including those responsible for SEND, the early years, attendance and pupils' behaviour, welfare and personal development.

- The lead inspector met with three governors. He held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their learning in some other subjects. Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The lead inspector met with parents and reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He reviewed the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey to consider.
- Inspectors spoke to safeguarding leaders about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents. Inspectors talked with pupils about their safety and welfare. Inspectors examined a range of policies and documents. They also scrutinised safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alex Farrow	Ofsted Inspector

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