

Inspection of a good school: Irlam Primary School

Liverpool Road, Irlam, Manchester M44 6NA

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 December 2022

Outcome

Irlam Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend Irlam Primary School. They are caring and responsible citizens who adhere to the school's values, including those of respect, forgiveness and generosity. They are conscientious learners. They enjoy finding out new things and socialising with their friends.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. As a result, the school is a calm and purposeful place where pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn well across the curriculum. Children in the early years are enthusiastic and cooperative. They also learn well.

Pupils are happy and safe at school. They know that staff will listen to their concerns. On the very rare occasions on which bullying takes place, staff take immediate action to stop it from happening. Pupils understand British values, including those of democracy and the rule of law. Those who spoke to the inspector said that everyone should be treated fairly and equally.

Pupils are conscientious. During the inspection, they enjoyed entertaining and serving Christmas lunch to local residents. They care about their community and those less fortunate than themselves. They raise funds for worthy causes and lead 'tidy-up' campaigns to keep the local area litter free.

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

Leaders and governors have created a logically ordered curriculum which helps pupils, and children in the early years to develop their knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects. Leaders want pupils to be more than 'competent calculators' in mathematics and fluent readers. They want them to be problem-solvers who have a strong appreciation of the work of different authors and poets. These high aspirations help to make certain that pupils enjoy learning and achieve well.

In most subjects, teachers deliver the curriculum consistently well. Typically, they check how well pupils are learning and go over learning that pupils have forgotten, or not understood. However, in a few subjects, their strategies to help pupils to know and remember more of their learning are not as effective as they could be. As a result, in these subjects, some pupils have gaps in their learning and do not have the knowledge and skills that they need to deepen their understanding.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Staff are trained well to deliver structured and well-organised phonics and early reading curriculums. Consequently, pupils read confidently. Teachers introduce pupils to a rich and diverse range of authors and poets. This helps to generate an interest in and excitement about reading. Pupils whom the inspector heard reading did so fluently. They quoted poetry effortlessly and summarised the plots of their books well. Children in the Nursery classes are developing their early reading skills well. Children in the Reception classes and pupils in key stage 1 respond especially well to phonics. Pupils in need of additional one-to-one support are developing their confidence and reading fluency effectively.

Leaders identify pupils and children in the early years with SEND early. Experienced and well-trained school leaders continually assess the quality and impact of the support available to pupils with SEND. Leaders also work with a broad range of external specialists to ensure that if needed, pupils get the support that they need promptly. Leaders' effective work helps to ensure that pupils with SEND have access to the same curriculum as their peers. Some parents of pupils with SEND told the inspector that leaders are always available to give them advice and support.

Pupils behave very well indeed. They are resilient and eager to share their ideas. Children in the early years listen intently during story time. They play sensibly in the outdoor learning and play areas. Pupils and children follow the rules. Consequently, lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders make available an exciting personal development curriculum which provides opportunities for pupils to pursue their interests. For example, pupils attend a variety of after-school clubs, including coding, street dance, music and hockey clubs. They develop their leadership skills as curriculum ambassadors, sports leaders, school council members and peer mentors. Pupils organised a variety of events to raise money for children's charities and local good causes. During the inspection, they participated in a 'Santa dash' fundraising event. Pupils learn about healthy relationships. They know how to maintain their physical fitness and mental health.

Leaders do not burden staff with unnecessary work. Those who spoke to the inspector told him that leaders are mindful of their well-being and mental health. Governors hold leaders to account for pupils' achievement and personal development. They also support leaders well and help the school to improve continually.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors and leaders are vigilant about safeguarding. They make sure that staff are familiar with the government's latest guidelines on keeping pupils safe in education. Leaders regularly update staff on safeguarding matters.

Staff know precisely what to do if they are concerned about a pupils' safety or welfare. They follow the school's robust reporting procedures. If necessary, leaders work with external organisations to ensure that pupils get the specialist support that they need promptly.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. For example, in computing, pupils learn to be aware of 'fake news' and how to recognise 'scams'.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, pupils do not remember some of their prior learning and so cannot build on it to deepen their understanding. Leaders' strategies to help pupils to know and remember more of their learning are not as effective as they should be. Leaders should continue to find out where pupils have gaps in their learning and provide them with the support that they need to catch up with their peers.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2012.

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	105898
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10226284
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	440
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tony Fiefield
Headteacher	Elaine Darwin
Website	www.irlamprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection of the school since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. He also met with the inclusion manager, the special educational needs coordinator and other leaders to discuss attendance and pupils' behaviour, welfare and personal development.
- The inspector met with eight governors. He also met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, he 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.

- The inspector met with pupils to discuss their learning in some other subjects. He spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The 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 and pupil surveys.
- The inspector spoke to safeguarding leaders about the reporting and recording of safeguarding incidents. He talked with pupils about their safety and welfare. He examined a range of policies and documents. He also scrutinised safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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