

Inspection of Yew Tree Primary Academy

The Avenue, Halewood, Knowsley, Merseyside L26 1UU

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils wear their school uniform with pride. They enjoy learning and socialising with their friends. Pupils help to ensure that Yew Tree Primary Academy is a harmonious school, where pupils respect each other and staff.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. This helps to ensure that most pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those in the Designated Special Provision, achieve well in different areas of the curriculum. Children in the early years also learn well.

Pupils are happy and safe at school. They have different ways of sharing their concerns with staff, including using the 'worry monster'. Pupils learn about cultural and religious diversity through different aspects of the curriculum. They know that discriminatory behaviour is wrong. If bullying happens, it is dealt with effectively by staff.

Pupils appreciate British values, including the rule of law. They are active citizens, who enjoy helping others and raising funds for children's and cancer charities.

Pupils enjoy visits to the theatre, art galleries, museums and a local safari park. They visit York and Chester as part of their studies in history. Pupils pursue their interest in dance, drama and different sports such as rugby, cricket and football.

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

In most subjects, leaders have developed a logically ordered curriculum which is implemented well by teachers and teaching assistants. Specialist staff deliver an ambitious curriculum to pupils with SEND in the Designated Special Provision.

Staff encourage pupils to become lifelong readers. They also help pupils to develop strong calculation and social skills. Over recent years, leaders and staff have improved pupils' learning well. Due to this, most pupils are well prepared for their learning in high school.

Typically, teachers check how well pupils are learning. This helps teachers to identify where pupils are learning securely, as well as where pupils may have gaps in their learning. However, in a small number of subjects, leaders have not precisely identified the knowledge and skills that they want pupils to acquire and when to teach it. This makes it harder for teachers to build pupils' knowledge over time and to check whether pupils have understood and remembered their learning.

Leaders place a high priority on reading. Pupils, and children in the early years, benefit from a well-organised phonics curriculum which is implemented effectively by well-trained staff. Pupils in the early stages of reading, and pupils with SEND in the Designated Special Provision, respond positively to the strategies that staff use,

including phonics, to help to improve their reading skills. As a result, pupils are developing their reading fluency well. Pupils who were heard to read did so confidently and with good expression. Older pupils read widely. They have a strong appreciation of the work of different authors.

Leaders identify pupils with SEND promptly. When necessary, they work with external experts to ensure that pupils get the support that they need immediately. Staff are trained well. They make sure that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils in the Designated Special Provision benefit from curriculums which are tailored to meet their individual needs. However, with specialist help, some older pupils participate in English and mathematics lessons in the main school. The parents and carers of pupils with SEND who spoke with inspectors praised the school highly for supporting their children.

Staff help pupils to manage their emotions and feelings. Pupils' considerate behaviour in class ensures that disruption in lessons is rare. Typically, children in the Nursery and Reception classes are well focused on activities. They work together cooperatively and enjoy learning.

Most pupils regularly attend school. However, leaders' initiatives to improve pupils' attendance are not having the rapid impact that leaders intend. A small core of pupils are persistently absent. Pupils' poor attendance has an adverse impact on their achievement and their personal and social development.

The wider curriculum promotes most pupils' personal development well. Pupils enjoy attending different after-school clubs, including craft, multi-skills, judo, film and art clubs. They are keen on the performing arts. Pupils recently performed 'The Tempest' at a local theatre. Year 6 pupils hone their orienteering skills during their annual residential learning in Wales. Across the school, pupils develop their leadership skills as prefects, librarians, eco-warriors and school council members. Pupils learn how to maintain their mental and physical health.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They benefit from regular training and development. Staff told inspectors that leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being.

Leaders of the Wade Deacon Trust, and the local governing body, support the school effectively. They know which areas of the curriculum have improved and where there is more work to be done.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders ensure that staff are familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. Leaders also make sure that staff are familiar with the government's latest guidelines on keeping pupils

safe in education. Leaders regularly update staff on matters relating to pupils' welfare and safety.

Staff know how to spot potential signs of neglect and/or abuse. If they have any concerns about pupils, they report them immediately. When needed, leaders work with different external partners to ensure that pupils get the help that they need without delay.

Pupils learn about dangers and risks. For example, they learn about how to use the internet and electronic devices safely.

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 precisely identified the knowledge and skills that they want pupils to acquire and exactly when they should be taught. This makes it more difficult for teachers to build up pupils' knowledge and to check whether pupils have understood and remembered their learning over time. Leaders should identify the key knowledge that they want pupils to acquire and when they want them to acquire it. This will help to ensure that teachers know what to teach and in what order and improve pupils' learning.
- Persistent absence is high. A significant core of pupils have missed long periods of education. As a result, their achievement and personal development are not as strong as they should be. Leaders should explore different ways to help pupils to attend school regularly.

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	146115
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10256017
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	256
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Fowler
Headteacher	Rebecca O'Hanlon
Website	www.yewtreeknowsley.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The academy is part of the Wade Deacon Trust.
- Yew Tree Primary Academy converted to become an academy school in September 2018. When its predecessor school, Yew Tree Primary Community School (with Designated Special Provision), was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

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 since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and assistant headteachers. They also met with leaders responsible for pupils with SEND, early years provision and pupils' behaviour, welfare and personal development.
- The lead inspector met with two governors. He also met with three members of the trust, including the chief executive officer. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and geography. For each deep dive, they 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 inspectors met with pupils to discuss their learning in some other subjects. They spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspectors met with parents and reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey to consider.
- The inspectors spoke to the designated safeguarding leads about the reporting and recording of safeguarding incidents. They talked with pupils about their safety and welfare. The 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
Shameem Patel	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Sherriff	Ofsted Inspector

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