

Inspection of a good school: Carr Mill Primary School

Kentmere Avenue, Carr Mill, St Helens, Merseyside WA11 7PQ

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2023

Outcome

Carr Mill Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and children in the early years, enjoy coming to school. They are proud to be members of #teamcarrmill. Pupils are positive about learning and respectful to each other and adults.

Pupils are happy and safe at school. They know that they can talk to any member of staff if they have any worries. Pupils said that their concerns are taken seriously and dealt with quickly by staff. Leaders make certain that any incidents of bullying are resolved swiftly.

Staff are determined to help pupils to be the best that they can be. They expect pupils to behave well and achieve highly. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), respond well to these expectations. They have positive attitudes to learning and they achieve well in different areas of the curriculum.

Pupils are active citizens. They raise funds for different charities. Pupils look after their school. Recently, they worked with staff, and members of the local community, to restore the school's friendship garden.

Leaders enliven the curriculum and broaden pupils' horizons. Year 6 pupils enjoy their annual London excursion, where they visit London landmarks including Westminster Abbey and the Natural History and Science Museum. Recently, all pupils watched a performance at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall.

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

Leaders and governors have constructed an ambitious and well-ordered curriculum, which engages pupils and captures their interest. Across most subjects, leaders have identified the core knowledge that they want pupils to gain. They have also made it clear to teachers when pupils will learn this subject knowledge.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They deliver the curriculum well. This helps to ensure that pupils consolidate their knowledge as they move through the early years up to Year 6. Pupils are well prepared for their learning in secondary school. In a small number of subjects, leaders are refining what they want pupils to know and understand. Pupils do not deepen their understanding as well as they should in these curriculum areas. Teachers regularly check pupils' learning. This helps teachers to identify where pupils' learning is less secure.

Leaders place reading at the very heart of the curriculum. However, the published data for those pupils who left Year 6 in 2022, showed that these pupils did not achieve as well in reading as they did in other subjects. Leaders have acted quickly to remedy this situation. They have strengthened the reading curriculum further and placed a greater emphasis on building pupils' reading stamina and confidence. This work is paying off. Many older pupils are becoming passionate readers. Younger pupils also love to read. They are developing into self-assured and fluent readers. Pupils enjoy participating in different reading challenges and sharing their favourite books with their peers.

The phonics and early reading curriculums are taught well by skilled and experienced staff. Early reading starts in the Nursery, where children enjoy nursery rhymes and sounding-out new words. Children in the Reception class learn phonics soon after they start at the school. Pupils who need additional help with reading are supported effectively. Due to leaders' careful approach to early reading, pupils learn to read quickly.

Leaders identify pupils with SEND without delay. Leaders work closely with external agencies to make certain that when needed, pupils get the specialist support that they need. Leaders have crafted the curriculum carefully to ensure that pupils with SEND do not miss out on any aspect of learning. This means that pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers and learn well.

A calmness pervades the school. Children in the early years are highly curious. Typically, they follow the school rules closely and work together cooperatively. Across the rest of the school, pupils' conscientiousness helps to ensure that lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to pursue their interests. Most pupils participate in clubs, including gardening, multi-skills, science, theatre and craft clubs. Pupils value developing their leadership skills as members of the student leadership team and as reading ambassadors. Pupils learn about, and develop a strong appreciation of, cultural and religious diversity. They take their roles as breakfast bistro leaders seriously and enjoy serving breakfast to their peers. As mini medics, pupils learn about first aid. Pupils develop their singing talents and sign language skills in the white gloves choir. Leaders help pupils to maintain their mental health. Due to this, pupils are positive, resilient and content at school.

Governors know the school well. They challenge and support leaders effectively. Staff told the inspector that leaders are mindful of their well-being. They are not burdened with unnecessary work.

Most parents and carers are very supportive of the school. Parents appreciate the advice and information available on the school's website, which helps them to support their children's learning at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are vigilant when it comes to safeguarding. They ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities to secure pupils' safety and welfare. Staff are familiar with the latest government guidelines on keeping pupils safe in education, as well as the school's safeguarding policies and procedure. Staff record and report any concerns that they have about pupils' welfare swiftly.

Leaders' strong links with different external agencies ensure that vulnerable pupils get the support that they need promptly.

Pupils learn to keep themselves safe in different ways. For example, through the computing curriculum, pupils gain a thorough understanding of internet safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' curriculum thinking is less well developed in a few areas of the curriculum. This stops pupils from deepening their understanding as well as they should. Leaders should make sure that they clearly define the content of the curriculum in these subjects so that pupils know and remember more.

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 school to be good in March 2017.

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	134661
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10226130
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	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dave Rimmer
Headteacher	Andrew Maley
Website	carmillprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 March 2017, under section 5 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 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers and other senior leaders to discuss provision for pupils with SEND, attendance and pupils' behaviour, welfare and personal development.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body. He held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. 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 also heard pupils read.
- 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 relating to safeguarding, including the school's safeguarding policy.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023