

Inspection of a good school: Higher Failsworth Primary School

Stansfield Road, Failsworth, Oldham, Greater Manchester M35 9EA

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They know that staff care about them. Staff take the time to listen to any worries or concerns that pupils have. Leaders deal with any incidents of unkindness or bullying quickly and well. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe at school.

Pupils are well mannered, respectful and caring towards each other. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school reflects leaders' high expectations. Pupils can get on with their learning with very few distractions.

Leaders have recently made some improvements to the school's curriculum to raise pupils' achievement, including for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In a few subjects, these changes are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. However, in other subjects, these changes are in the early stages. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should across the curriculum.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development well. Pupils benefit from a wide range of after-school activities, such as dance, football, choir and art club. Older pupils are proud of their leadership roles, such as head boy, head girl and school librarians.

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

Leaders are in the process of developing new subject curriculums. In some subjects, leaders have clearly identified the important knowledge that pupils must know and remember. In these subjects, leaders have provided teachers with appropriate help and support so that they can deliver the subject curriculums effectively. As a result, pupils learn well in these subjects.

However, other subjects are at an earlier stage of development. A few subject leaders are relatively new to their roles. In these subjects, leaders have not clarified what it is that they want pupils to learn or the order in which this knowledge should be taught. Added to this, these subject leaders have not ensured that teachers are fully equipped to deliver the curriculum well. Pupils do not learn as well as they should in these subjects.

In those subjects where the curriculum has been well thought out, teachers use assessment strategies effectively to establish what pupils know and can do. This helps teachers to design appropriate learning activities that pupils are able to access. However, this is not the case in the other subjects. Teachers are less clear about what pupils should already know and be able to do. This means that teachers do not pick up on pupils' misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge quickly enough. This prevents teachers from designing learning as well as they could.

Leaders have ensured that reading has a high profile in the school. Children are taught phonics as soon as they start in the Reception class. Leaders make sure that the phonics programme is taught consistently well. This helps pupils to become increasingly confident and fluent readers. Staff identify pupils who are not keeping up with their phonics knowledge. They provide extra help to make sure that these pupils catch up quickly with their peers.

Leaders identify pupils who may have additional needs quickly and accurately. Staff receive specialist training to help them to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders work well with external agencies to make sure that pupils with SEND get the support that they need. Pupils with SEND learn the curriculum well alongside their peers.

Pupils' personal development is well considered by leaders. All pupils, including those with SEND, benefit from a rich set of experiences, such as trips to museums and local attractions. Pupils are respectful of the differences between themselves and others. They enjoy learning about religions and cultures that are different from their own.

Governors know the school and its community well. They have a strong understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, governors are developing their understanding of their wider leadership responsibilities.

Staff are proud to work at this school. Leaders regularly check on staff's well-being and are considerate of staff's workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff know pupils and their families well. Staff are quick to identify any pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders respond to these concerns in a timely manner. Leaders work closely with external agencies to offer pupils and their families the support that they need.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when working or playing online. Pupils know what to do and who to talk with if they do not feel safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the essential knowledge that pupils must learn. In these subjects, pupils do not develop a deep body of subject knowledge. Leaders must finalise their curriculum thinking in these subjects and ensure that teachers are clear about what pupils should learn and when this content should be taught.
- A few subject leaders are relatively new to their roles. These subject leaders are less confident and expert in carrying out their responsibilities. This hinders how well some pupils learn in these subjects. Leaders should continue to provide these subject leaders with further training and support so that they lead their subject areas effectively.
- In some subjects, teachers do not check that pupils understand and remember the most important knowledge in the curriculum. This makes it hard for pupils to make sense of new learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers routinely check on how well pupils have learned the curriculum. This is so that they can address gaps in pupils' knowledge quickly and design learning that builds on what pupils already know.

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 June 2013.

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	134784
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10256137
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Austin Pass
Headteacher	Samantha Forster
Website	www.higher-failsworth.oldham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. She met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the governing board and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and teaching assistants, spoke to some pupils about their learning, listened to pupils' read and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also considered other subjects.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector looked at the single central record of staff suitability checks. She met with the leaders responsible for safeguarding, sampled case studies and reviewed documentation.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils and spoke to pupils during breaktimes and breakfast club. She also considered pupils' responses to Ofsted's online survey.
- The inspector spoke with some parents and carers as they dropped their children off at school. She also reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector held meetings with members of staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Kelly Butler, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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