

Inspection of a good school: Dean Valley Community Primary School

Albert Road, Bollington, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 5HS

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 February 2023

Outcome

Dean Valley Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils welcome everyone to this school with a smile. They are polite and care for each other. It is a happy place to be.

Leaders and staff are determined for all pupils to succeed, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children in the Reception Year, and pupils in key stages 1 and 2, learn the curriculum well.

Pupils try hard to live up to leaders' high expectations. They behave well and enjoy their learning. They told the inspector that they trust the adults around them to deal with any problems, including any incidents of bullying. This helps them to feel safe at school.

Leaders make sure that pupils learn about the fundamental rights that everyone has. This helps pupils to develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils know how important it is to treat everyone with respect, regardless of difference.

Leaders enrich pupils' learning through a wide variety of opportunities beyond the classroom. Pupils enjoy taking part in the daily mile and learning outdoors in the woodland area. Children in the Reception class enjoy learning about nature, including meeting newborn lambs from a local farm and taking care of Pumpkin, Pip and Popcorn, the school guinea pigs.

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

Leaders are clear that all pupils, including pupils with SEND, deserve a high-quality education. They have achieved this vision. Leaders have designed a curriculum which connects ambitious knowledge with rich cultural and social experiences.

Leaders have organised the curriculum knowledge into a series of engaging topics. In most subjects, they have ensured that this knowledge follows a logical order from the Reception Year to Year 6. However, there are areas where subject leaders have not

finalised their curriculum thinking. The subject-specific content of some topics is less clear. This makes it harder for pupils to make connections between current and past learning. Consequently, pupils sometimes struggle to remember what they have learned over time.

In the main, teachers deliver the curriculum well. They work as a team to share their subject expertise so that all pupils benefit equally well.

Teachers know their pupils well and understand their needs. They use a range of strategies to check what pupils have learned. This information helps them to address areas that pupils have not fully grasped.

Reading is central to the curriculum. Leaders have introduced a wide range of strategies to promote a love of reading. Pupils read with increasing confidence and independence as they move through school. They enjoy sharing their favourite books with classmates during 'storytime takeover'.

Children get off to a strong start by learning phonics from the very beginning of the Reception Year. Teachers and teaching assistants are experts in teaching pupils to read. Their skilful support ensures that any pupils who fall behind with reading, including older pupils in key stage 2, can catch up quickly.

Leaders aspire highly for pupils with SEND. They have developed rigorous systems to identify any additional needs that pupils may have. Leaders work closely with staff and external agencies to ensure these needs are met. More recently, leaders have provided additional training for staff. This is helping to ensure that pupils with SEND are learning well alongside their peers.

Pupils conduct themselves very well in lessons and around school. Children in the Reception class quickly learn to follow adults' instructions. As they move through key stages 1 and 2, pupils learn how their choices might affect other people's rights. This helps them to manage their own behaviour. Pupils are proud that bullying is not tolerated at their school. They told the inspector that they learn to be 'upstanders, not bystanders'.

Leaders provide a wealth of opportunities to develop pupils' wider interests. For example, every child learns a musical instrument and has the chance to perform in the school play. Teachers support pupils' spiritual and moral development through carefully chosen class stories. Pupils enjoy participating in sports. Leaders have ensured that these activities are suitably adapted so that they include everyone, including those with SEND.

Pupils told the inspector about a wide range of trips and activities that they have enjoyed. For example, pupils in Year 6 spoke enthusiastically about a trip to York where they learned about the Vikings.

Staff recognise that in a small school there is a need to take on many different responsibilities. They do this willingly. Staff appreciate the steps that governors and leaders have taken to support them. For example, leaders ensure that staff are well trained and have time to carry out their roles effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. They have ensured that staff are well trained to spot any signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm. Staff understand the importance of reporting any concerns quickly so that leaders can take appropriate action.

Leaders ensure that pupils and their families get the right kind of help when they need it. Leaders work with external agencies to secure this help. They are not afraid to challenge these agencies if they think that more help is needed.

Pupils learn about issues such as online safety, privacy and consent through the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some of the foundation subjects, leaders have not considered carefully enough how pupils build their knowledge of the curriculum over time. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their learning. This makes it difficult for them to build cumulatively on this knowledge in the future. Leaders should ensure that the knowledge in each subject curriculum is both logically sequenced and revisited frequently enough. This is to ensure that pupils learn and remember more as they progress through the curriculum.

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 October 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	111147
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10256190
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Roland Edwards
Headteacher	Vicky McPherson
Website	www.deanvalley.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher, senior leadership team and chair of governors have all been appointed since the school was last inspected.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. He met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils. The inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation. He spoke to the headteacher and senior leaders throughout the inspection. He also met with the special educational needs coordinator.

- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- The inspector held meetings with the staff responsible for safeguarding and scrutinised the single central record. The inspector considered leaders' safeguarding processes and procedures. He observed pupils during social times and discussed safeguarding with them.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Ben Hill, lead inspector

His Majesty's 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