

Inspection of a good school: Higher Openshaw Community School

Saunton Road, Higher Openshaw, Manchester M11 1AJ

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 June 2023

Outcome

Higher Openshaw Community School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this school. They enjoy learning, and they typically achieve in line with leaders' high expectations. Pupils feel safe and cared for. Their positive relationships with staff shine through. For example, pupils enjoy playing games with staff at breaktimes.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils learn to make positive behaviour choices. Pupils are delighted when leaders reward them for their conduct. For example, pupils who have made positive choices throughout the week are invited to attend the 'Always Club', where they celebrate with hot chocolate.

Leaders have thought carefully about how they promote pupils' well-being. Pupils benefit from activities that develop their confidence and resilience, such as outdoor learning opportunities. Pupils take part in sessions where they reflect on their positive qualities. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about these experiences.

Leaders foster strong relationships across the school community. Many older pupils take responsibility for supporting their younger peers. For example, digital leaders help younger pupils to learn computer skills, and peer mentors are available if other pupils need someone to talk to. Playground buddies make sure that pupils are included in games at breaktime. This helps everyone to feel welcome. If pupils are unkind, or if bullying happens, leaders respond swiftly and effectively.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have ensured that pupils' learning builds logically from the early years to Year 6. They have thought carefully about how they can provide learning experiences that develop pupils' understanding of the wider world. For example, children in the early years recently learned about life cycles by planting seeds and caring for eggs

until they hatched into ducklings. These additional opportunities help to bring the curriculum to life for pupils. Pupils across the school achieve well.

Subject leaders have thought about what pupils should know and by when. Typically, subject leaders have precisely identified the important information that pupils need to learn. However, in a small number of subjects, leaders have not ensured that teachers carefully check that pupils have learned and remembered this information. This means that teachers sometimes move on to new learning before pupils' prior knowledge is secure.

Leaders promote a love of reading across the school. This begins in the early years, where children enjoy stories, rhymes and songs. Leaders encourage parents and carers to share stories with their children. For example, they invite parents and pupils into school in the evening for bedtime story sessions. Pupils comment that they enjoy reading. One pupil described it as 'like being in a different world in my mind'.

Leaders have made sure that all staff are trained to teach phonics well. Staff carefully follow leaders' chosen phonics programme. Pupils read books that are matched to the sounds they know. This helps them to become confident readers. Staff quickly identify those pupils who fall behind with their reading knowledge. Staff typically provide effective support to help these pupils to develop into accurate and fluent readers.

Leaders swiftly identify any additional needs that pupils may have when they join the school. Leaders ensure that all staff are trained well to support pupils to learn the curriculum. Pupils with SEND achieve well alongside their peers. A very small number of children in the early years receive additional expert support in 'The Beehive' provision. These children are supported well so that they can join their peers in lessons at the earliest opportunity. In the meantime, they enjoy getting involved in the wider life of the school alongside their friends.

Leaders cultivate a very calm atmosphere in the school. Staff model the behaviours that they want pupils to display. Children learn about the link between their emotions and their behaviour, which starts in the early years. Most pupils arrive to lessons ready to learn. They are attentive to their teachers. Learning is not usually disrupted.

Leaders provide a comprehensive programme to support pupils' wider development. Pupils learn about the importance of respecting others and treating everyone equally. They also learn about how to keep themselves healthy and safe. Leaders ensure that the most vulnerable pupils benefit from additional support to learn this important information. Pupils are prepared well for their lives beyond primary school.

Governors work with leaders to review and refine the quality of education that they provide. Staff talk positively about the support they receive, both from leaders and from each other. Staff feel valued. They appreciate leaders' explanations of how any new initiatives will benefit pupils. Staff are overwhelmingly proud and happy to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. They are tenacious advocates for vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders have robust processes in place to identify and monitor those pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders ensure that staff, including governors, receive frequent training updates so that they are knowledgeable about safeguarding concerns in the local area. Leaders work closely with external agencies to secure support for vulnerable pupils.

Pupils learn important information about keeping themselves safe. For example, they learn about water safety. Leaders reinforce these messages in a variety of ways, including through the wider curriculum, assemblies and workshops.

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 ensured that teachers carefully check that pupils know and remember the essential knowledge identified in the curriculum. This hinders teachers in designing learning activities that build securely on what pupils already know. Leaders should ensure that teachers check that pupils are learning the intended curriculum and address any gaps or misconceptions before introducing new knowledge.

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 May 2018.

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	105471
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10291388
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	335
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Helene Helsby
Headteacher	John Dent
Website	www.higher-openshaw.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 and 10 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The governing body provides a breakfast club for pupils.
- School leaders do not make use of any 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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher and other leaders.
- The inspector completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. She met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed samples of pupils' work and spoke with staff and pupils.
- The inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar member of staff. She spoke with some pupils about their reading.

- The inspector checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including the school's single central record. She met with leaders, staff and pupils to check on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the school.
- The inspector met with pupils to ask about their experience of school. She considered pupils' responses to Ofsted's survey.
- The inspector met with groups of staff. She considered responses from staff to Ofsted's survey.
- The inspector considered parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also spoke to some parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including those relating to school improvement.
- The inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector visited the breakfast club.

Inspection team

Sally Rix, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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