

Inspection of Halsnead Primary School

Pennywood Drive, Whiston, Prescot, Merseyside L35 3TX

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where all pupils are welcome, irrespective of their faith or background. Pupils said that they are proud of the way that they respect each other and adults. Pupils feel happy and safe at school.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged. Pupils embody the school's values of resilience and integrity in their approach to learning. They work hard and mostly achieve well.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are keen to live up to these expectations. They are polite and well-mannered. Leaders deal with any incidents of bullying quickly and effectively. Furthermore, any pupil can access the Thrive Hub. Pupils said that this is a space in school where pupils with SEND, or those needing extra pastoral care, receive social and emotional support. They value this.

Pupils benefit from an array of school trips that help to build their awareness of the wider world. These trips include visits to places of historical significance and places of worship. Pupils talked with excitement about their visits from local authors, and the clubs that they attend, such as dodgeball and cross-stitch.

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

Since the previous inspection, the new leadership team has successfully focused on developing the curriculum. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced, and that it is commensurate with the national curriculum. In the main, leaders have carefully considered the important knowledge that pupils should learn, from the Nursery class to the end of key stage 2. Typically, teachers deliver this knowledge in a logical order. Pupils achieve well overall. Children in the early years are well prepared for key stage 1.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Teachers successfully use leaders' assessment systems to check what pupils know and remember of different subjects over time. Overall, teachers provide pupils with the opportunity to revisit previous learning before moving on to new learning. They devise appropriate lesson activities that help pupils to make sense of new topics and concepts. Typically, this helps pupils, including those with SEND, to build a deep body of knowledge over time.

In a small number of subjects, however, leaders have not ensured that teachers identify and address the gaps in knowledge that some pupils have due to weaknesses in the previous curriculum. This means that some pupils have insecure foundations on which to build new learning in these subjects. Where teachers have not provided learning activities that help pupils to backfill this knowledge, pupils' learning is sometimes more fragile.

By the end of Year 6, in 2022, pupils did not attain as well as other pupils nationally in mathematics. This was partly due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which left some older pupils with gaps in their mathematical knowledge. Nonetheless, current pupils are progressing better through the mathematics curriculum. For example, they are developing confidence in multiplying numbers.

Children in the early years settle well to school life due to caring and nurturing staff. Staff use learning activities well to model early language and develop children's vocabulary. Leaders have also cultivated a love of reading. Interesting and engaging books are a prominent feature throughout the school. Pupils excitedly told inspectors that they can earn gold coins to buy the new books that they want.

Leaders ensure that staff have had the training that they need to teach the phonics programme consistently well. Leaders put support in place for pupils who need help to catch up with their reading knowledge. This helps these pupils to keep up with their peers. Staff provide pupils with books to read that contain the sounds that they know. Most pupils are confident and fluent readers by the end of Year 2.

Leaders have effective systems to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Staff benefit from training delivered by special educational needs specialists. In the main, teachers adapt the delivery of the curriculum well for pupils with SEND. These pupils learn the same curriculum as their peers, and they are fully involved in all aspects of school life.

Leaders place a very strong emphasis on fostering pupils' wider personal development. Pupils relish the range of experiences that are available to them. For example, pupils develop their understanding of different jobs through a careers event in school.

Pupils are attentive in lessons. Children in the early years quickly learn the school rules and routines. For example, they listen attentively to staff and cooperate well with their classmates. However, a minority of pupils are often absent from school. This prevents these pupils from experiencing all that the curriculum has to offer.

Governors and members of the trust value school leaders and staff. They have successfully challenged leaders to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. Staff feel listened to by leaders, who invest greatly in their ongoing training and development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are trained well to spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff follow clear procedures to report any concerns that they have about a pupil. Leaders engage well with other professionals and organisations so that pupils and their families can access extra support when they need it.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves and others safe. They recognise what constitutes safe behaviour in a range of situations, for example when online. Pupils know where to seek extra help if they need it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- ☒ In a few subjects, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge due to weaknesses in the previous curriculum. On occasion, these pupils do not have the most secure foundations on which to build new learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers identify and address gaps in pupils' learning before teaching new concepts.
- ☒ Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This limits their exposure to all that the curriculum offers. Leaders should work with the families of these pupils to improve their rates of attendance.

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	144105
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10268358
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained academy
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	315
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Stevenson
Executive headteacher	Sarah Greer
Website	www.halsnead.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Heath Family Trust.
- The executive headteacher and the head of school took up post in September 2021.
- Leaders make use of a registered alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- The local governing body operates a breakfast club.

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 received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with

members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. She spoke with the school improvement partner. The lead inspector also met with the chief executive of the trust and the chair of trustees.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, geography, science, and art and design. As part of each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke with teachers. Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils about their learning and reviewed a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed the curriculum in other subject areas. They also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including school policies, records of behaviour, school improvement documents and a sample of documents for pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector checked the procedures for recruiting new members of staff, spoke to the designated safeguarding leads and spoke to staff about how they report concerns.
- Inspectors reviewed information about pupils' behaviour, their attendance and their wider personal development.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers, and considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors took into account the responses from the Ofsted survey for staff and the Ofsted survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Ruth Moran, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
David Robinson	His Majesty's Inspector
Sharon Cliff	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector

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