

Inspection of a good school: Oldfield Primary School

Green Lane, Vicars Cross, Chester, Cheshire CH3 5LB

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 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 school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Oldfield Primary School are proud of their school. They are happy coming to school and attend well. Pupils and staff embrace the school's values of cooperation, achievement, respect and enjoyment. These values are reflected in the strong relationships between members of the school community.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This is gently communicated to pupils from the start of their time in school. Pupils live up to these high expectations. They are encouraged to recognise their emotions and control their response to them. The school provides a calm and orderly environment. At playtimes, pupils engage in a range of activities together. They learn to share and to consider the views and feelings of others.

The school is aspirational for what pupils can achieve, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, these aspirations are not being achieved. Pupils are not learning as well as they should across some areas of the curriculum. This is because the key knowledge that pupils need to know and remember in several subjects has only been very recently identified.

Pupils enjoy the variety of activities on offer, such as residential visits and watching live performances. They relish attending after-school activities, including sport and dance clubs.

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

The school is in the process of reviewing the curriculum. In some subjects, the school has thought carefully about what it wants pupils to learn and when they should learn it. In these subjects, teachers are delivering the curriculum as the school intends. They recap

and revisit knowledge on a regular basis. Teachers address misconceptions swiftly, and pupils build their knowledge well over time.

The foundation subjects are at various stages of this review process. In some subjects, the essential knowledge that pupils should learn is made clear. In these subjects, teachers use the school's assessment strategies effectively to check how well pupils have learned the intended curriculum. This enables teachers to ensure that earlier learning has been retained. Pupils are able to build successfully on what they have learned before, and this helps to secure new learning. However, in some other subjects, the school has not established the key knowledge that pupils need to know. In these subjects, pupils do not access learning at sufficient depth. Consequently, they have some gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The lack of clearly defined key knowledge also makes it difficult for teachers to assess whether pupils have understood and remembered their learning over time. Additionally, in some subjects, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to reinforce their learning. This hinders some pupils when they embark on later learning and holds back their achievement.

Children in the Reception class are settling into their new school. They are adapting well to new routines and developing their listening and attention skills. The school has not finalised its thinking on the important knowledge that children need to know as they develop their understanding of the world. As a result, in some areas of learning, clear links between early years learning and the knowledge required for key stage 1 have not been developed. As a result, children have not been prepared well for learning in these areas in key stage 1.

The school has prioritised reading. This work has ensured that pupils of all ages have a positive attitude towards reading. Pupils start the phonics programme as soon as they start in the Reception class. Staff have been trained well to deliver this programme. The books that pupils take home match the sounds that they are learning in school. Staff identify any pupils who are not keeping up with the phonics programme, and they intervene quickly to support them. The school works in partnership with parents and carers and guides them on how to support their child's learning at home.

Pupils engage well with their learning. They follow teachers' instructions diligently. Learning is rarely disrupted.

The school has ensured that there are clear systems in place for identifying the individual needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers work effectively to adapt the curriculum to support these pupils. Pupils with SEND are fully involved in the life of the school.

The school places a high priority on pupils' mental health and well-being. Older pupils support younger pupils if they are unhappy or worried. Pupils learn about what is going on in the world. They respect difference. Pupils understand that everyone has the right to be free from discrimination. They are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

The staff told the inspector that they are supported well by the school. They appreciate the efforts that are made to consider their workload, particularly the amendments made to the marking policy.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school is still developing the curriculum in some subjects, and the essential knowledge that pupils need to know is not well established. In these subjects, pupils do not access the depth of learning that they could. They have some gaps in their knowledge as a result. The school should finalise its curriculum thinking in these remaining subjects.
- The lack of clearly defined knowledge in some subject areas makes it difficult for teachers to design effective assessment strategies that match the intent of the curriculum to check what pupils know and recall. It is also hard for teachers to identify misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school should continue to refine its approach to assessment in these subjects so that teachers can identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Some pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to consolidate their learning. This hinders some pupils from making links between previous learning and new learning. The school should ensure that teachers provide enough opportunities for pupils to revisit and consolidate important learning so that they are prepared well to apply what they know to more complex tasks.
- In some subjects, the school has not given sufficient consideration to the key knowledge that children in the early years need to know in order to be ready for their learning in key stage 1. Consequently, new and prior learning are not explicitly connected. This makes it more difficult for pupils to build successfully on what has been learned before and for staff to identify gaps in pupils' learning. The school should ensure that the curriculum is designed to prepare children in the early years for learning in key stage 1 and beyond.

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 November 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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	111230
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10294261
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Simon Barrowcliff
Headteacher	Alan Brown
Website	www.oldfield.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative education providers for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into the following subjects: mathematics, geography and early reading. She held discussions about the curriculum, visited some lessons, spoke to pupils and teachers and looked at pupils' work. She also discussed the curriculum in other subject areas.
- The inspector spoke to the headteacher, senior leaders, other leaders and representatives of the local authority.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.

- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, and the school's self-evaluation.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their views on the school, behaviour and bullying.
- The inspector listened to pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text responses. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Niamh Howlett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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