

Inspection of Unity Community Primary

Allesley Drive, Cheetham Hill, Manchester, Greater Manchester M7 4YE

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have positive relationships with their teachers. Many said that their teachers are the best thing about Unity Community Primary. Pupils feel safe in their teachers' care. Leaders ensure that pupils are indeed safe at the school.

Leaders have recently raised their expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils and staff recognise that this has brought about improvements in pupils' conduct. Most pupils, including children in the early years, behave well throughout the day. Some pupils stated that they experience bullying. However, leaders and teachers deal with such incidents appropriately.

Leaders have also raised their aspirations for what pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), will learn. They have introduced some new subject curriculums of late. These curriculums are well designed and ambitious for what pupils in key stages 1 and 2 will learn. In turn, pupils are beginning to achieve well in many areas of the curriculum. However, leaders have not given the same level of consideration to what children in the early years should learn. These children do not build their knowledge securely over time. Many are not well prepared for Year 1.

Pupils enjoy the sporting clubs that are available to them. They also enjoy the trips and residential visits that are slowly being reintroduced to the school calendar now that the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions have eased.

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

Leaders have maintained a good quality of education for pupils in Years 1 to 6. They have ensured that much of the school curriculum in key stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced. They have recently implemented many subject curriculums for those age groups which clearly outline the specific knowledge that pupils in most year groups will learn and when they will learn it. This helps teachers to deliver new subject content effectively. In turn, this also helps pupils to build their knowledge securely over time.

In contrast, leaders have been less successful in ensuring that children in the early years benefit from a similar standard of education. Leaders at different levels have not ensured that the early years curriculum enables children, including those who attend the two-year-old provision, to learn all that they should. For example, leaders have not set out the crucial knowledge that children should learn and when it will be taught. In turn, teachers and staff in the early years do not teach important content in a logical, well-thought-out order. They sometimes design learning activities that are too loosely linked to broad overarching themes and aims. As a result, although some children are prepared for the demands of Year 1, others are not.

Some leaders do not carry out effective checks on how well subject curriculums are being implemented. This means that they are not able to evaluate the impact of the

new subject curriculums. It also means that leaders are not well equipped to support teachers to develop their practice further. This is particularly problematic in the early years. Consequently, the issues with the curriculum in this area of the school persist.

In some subjects, leaders have outlined their expectations of how teachers should assess what pupils know and remember. This helps teachers to identify and address the gaps that pupils have in their knowledge. In other subjects, leaders have not provided teachers with the same level of guidance. In these subjects, teachers are unsure how best to establish what pupils have learned. This sometimes hinders teachers from helping pupils with their gaps and misconceptions.

Leaders have introduced a new phonics programme earlier this year. Staff recognise that it has had a positive impact on their practice. They are suitably trained and teach phonics consistently well. Leaders ensure that pupils learn the phonics programme soon after they start in the Reception class. Most pupils read books that are matched to the sounds that they know. Pupils who need extra help with learning to read get sufficient support to close gaps in their phonics knowledge. Pupils are learning to become fluent readers more quickly than before.

Leaders have ensured that staff are effective at identifying potential additional needs that pupils might have. Leaders take appropriate actions to secure extra support for these pupils when necessary. Leaders make sure that teachers are well equipped to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND so that they learn the same ambitious curriculum as their classmates. However, due to the deficiencies in the early years curriculum, the achievement of children with SEND mirrors that of their classmates.

Leaders have introduced new behaviour systems and routines which have led to positive improvements in pupils' conduct. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Most pupils behave calmly and sensibly throughout the day. However, sometimes leaders and teachers do not maintain sufficient records about bullying concerns and low-level misbehaviours. This means that leaders occasionally fail to notice and respond to individual issues as effectively as they could. This also means that leaders and trustees are not aware of some patterns of behaviour and bullying that are present in some classes.

Leaders cater for pupils' personal development well. They help pupils to understand how to keep themselves physically healthy. Pupils develop their knowledge of fundamental British values through the wider curriculum. They value the opportunity to celebrate each other's backgrounds and traditions through the annual 'international day' that leaders arrange for them. They have a secure awareness of the differences between people and different types of relationships. They are prepared for life in modern Britain.

Leaders and trustees are considerate of staff's workload and well-being. Staff are appreciative of leaders' actions. Those responsible for governance understand their role. However, they are not aware of some of the weaknesses in the quality of

education that children in the early years receive. This limits trustees' ability to hold leaders to account for the impact of their actions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff know how to recognise and report any concerns about a pupil's welfare. Leaders take effective action in response to these concerns. They make appropriate referrals to external agencies when required. However, leaders do not ensure that their checks on safeguarding records and procedures are robust enough.

The curriculum supports pupils to learn how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not given enough forethought to the specific knowledge that children in the early years, including those in the two-year-old provision, need to learn, nor how and when it will be taught. This means that some teachers do not deliver learning content in a logical order. Consequently, children do not build secure foundations of knowledge for future learning. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum throughout the early years is well designed and carefully ordered so that children acquire the building blocks of knowledge to be ready for key stage 1.
- Some leaders do not have a secure oversight of how well teachers are delivering subject curriculums. This is particularly the case in the early years. This means that leaders are not alert to some of the weaknesses in curriculum design and teachers' delivery of subject content. In turn, teachers sometimes do not teach important information in a way that helps pupils to build their knowledge securely over time. Leaders must review the approaches that they take to ensuring that subject curriculums are designed and delivered well.
- Some leaders have not given clear guidance to teachers on how to assess what pupils know and remember about their learning. This means that, in some subjects, teachers are unable to identify the gaps that pupils have and consider this information when designing suitable lesson content. Leaders should clarify their expectations for how teachers should assess pupils' learning and provide sufficient training on how to do this well.
- At times, leaders and those responsible for governance do not sufficiently assure themselves that records, policies and actions related to behaviour, bullying and safeguarding are as robust as they should be. At times, this means that leaders and governors miss opportunities to identify patterns or issues in these areas. Leaders and governors should review their approach to evaluating the effectiveness of their work in these areas to maintain a safe environment for pupils to learn and be happy.

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	141966
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10286278
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	322
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Emma Perry
Headteacher	Jude Lee
Website	www.unitycommunityprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	24 and 25 April 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Big Life Schools Trust.
- The number of pupils on roll has increased considerably since the last inspection. There are now pupils in all year groups. Most year groups are two-form entry. However, there is only one class in each of Year 5 and Year 6.
- There is provision for two-year-olds in the early years.
- A new deputy headteacher was appointed this academic year.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

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 has 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.

- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography, history, science and mathematics. They met with subject leaders and teachers. They visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning. The lead inspector observed pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum, spoke with pupils about their learning and evaluated their work in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector spoke with a group of governors and trustees. The lead inspector also spoke with the chief executive officer for the academy trust. Inspectors also talked to staff about their workload and well-being.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with the leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about safeguarding and their wider experience of school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documents related to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' policies and procedures to keep pupils safe. They discussed safeguarding arrangements with leaders and staff. Inspectors also checked the school's records of the suitability of staff to work with pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents and carers at the start of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

David Spruce, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nicky Corfield	Ofsted Inspector
Lisa Hesmondhalgh	Ofsted Inspector

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