

# Inspection of Ditton Primary School

Liverpool Road, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 7HD

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Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The head of school is Janette Pyne. This school is part of the Warrington Primary Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Louise Smith and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alistair Brown. There is also an executive headteacher, Chris Jones, who is responsible for this school and one other school in the trust.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. They receive a warm welcome from staff each day. Pupils value the caring relationships that they have with staff. Pupils trust that staff will help them with any concerns. This makes pupils feel safe at school.

The school has high expectations for what pupils should know and be able to do. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils want to do well. They take great pride in their learning. The corridors around school reflect the high standard of work produced by pupils. This is mirrored in their books. Pupils typically achieve well.

Pupils behave well during lessons and around the school. They are kind to each other. This includes children in the early years who cooperate, support and care for their classmates well.

Pupils appreciate the vast array of after-school clubs on offer to them. They benefit from leadership roles. For example, pupils are proud of the school library and the roles that they have as librarians. Pupils appreciate the opportunities that they have to explore their interests and talents, including learning to play musical instruments, such as the acoustic guitar.

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

Since joining the multi-academy trust, the school has acted decisively to address previous weaknesses in the curriculum, attendance and behaviour.

The school has established a new, coherent curriculum from the early years to the end of Year 6. The curriculum supports pupils to build their knowledge in a logical order. In the main, staff are clear about the knowledge that pupils should learn and when curriculum content should be taught. Pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well in most subjects. However, in some subjects, the school has not identified the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. This prevents some pupils from gaining the depth of knowledge that they should.

Teachers check what pupils know and can remember. Teachers then use this information to shape future teaching. They choose appropriate activities to help pupils to learn curriculum content. However, in some subjects, teachers do not revisit the most important knowledge regularly enough. This means that key concepts are not embedded in pupils' memories. This makes it difficult for them to recall what they have been taught when they encounter new learning.

The school identifies any additional needs that pupils may have quickly. It also ensures that staff adapt their teaching appropriately to meet the needs of pupils with SEND effectively. This means that pupils with SEND benefit from the same quality curriculum as their classmates.

The school has prioritised reading. Pupils enjoy listening to stories and reading a wide range of books. Leaders have established an effective phonics curriculum from the beginning of the Reception Year. Pupils learn sounds and letters in a logical order and use their phonics knowledge to accurately read new and unfamiliar words. They read books that contain the sounds that they know. This helps most pupils to read with confidence and fluency. Pupils relish taking the reading suitcase outside at playtime because it means that they can share books with friends.

Pupils behave well. They are kind, thoughtful and considerate of each other and of adults. They listen attentively to each other and to their teachers. Pupils behave in a calm and sensible manner in lessons and at social times. They are welcoming to visitors and make sure that everyone is included.

The school makes sure that pupils attend school regularly and arrive on time. Staff respond instantly, consistently and persistently when pupils do not arrive at school. However, there are still some pupils who are absent too often. This means that they do not achieve as well as they could.

The school has ensured that pupils have a wide range of experiences that extend beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils enjoy trips and residential opportunities. They talked positively about visits to museums and an art gallery. Pupils learn about people's differences and similarities. This helps them to develop an understanding of diversity and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Parents and carers appreciate the school's approach to communication. For example, many parents are positive about staff's willingness to listen and act on concerns. This means that, typically, parents feel confident to ask questions and trust that any issues will be dealt with quickly and effectively.

Trustees understand their statutory duties thoroughly and they fulfil their responsibilities diligently. Moreover, alongside the members of the local governing committee, they have a firm grasp of the school's strengths and priorities for further improvement. They routinely challenge and hold the leadership team fully to account.

Staff value working at this school. They appreciate that leaders' actions help them to carry out their roles effectively. For example, through investing in high-quality professional development staff feel that they can make a difference in school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a small number of subjects, some teachers are not sufficiently clear about the most important knowledge that they should teach and when this content should be delivered. This hinders how well teachers focus on the most important learning and prevents some pupils from gaining the depth of knowledge that they should. The school should finalise its curriculum thinking in these few remaining subjects so that staff know what pupils must learn.
- In some subjects, teachers do not revisit the most important knowledge that pupils need for future learning regularly enough. This hinders how well they support pupils to remember what they have been taught so that they can build on what they already know. The school should ensure that teachers routinely focus on the most important concepts identified in the curriculum for each subject.
- Some pupils do not attend school often enough and some groups of pupils are persistently absent. This limits their achievement. The school should further support those pupils, and their families, whose persistent absence is high.

## 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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147266
<b>Local authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290364
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	382
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Alastair Brown
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Louise Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janette Pyne
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.dittonprimary.co.uk">www.dittonprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Ditton Primary School converted to become an academy school in July 2019. When its predecessor school, Ditton Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school is part of the Warrington Primary Academy Trust.
- A new head of school and chair of the local governing committee have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school does 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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, including early reading, mathematics, physical education and history. 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 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also considered other curriculum areas. They met with leaders and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with the CEO, a group of governors, a group of trustees and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with the leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documents relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

### **Inspection team**

Helen Friend, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alison Lawson

Ofsted Inspector

Mike Tonge

Ofsted Inspector

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