

Inspection of Malpas Alport Endowed Primary School

Chester Road, Malpas, Cheshire SY14 8PY

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, parents and carers receive a warm welcome from staff each morning at this school which is at the heart of its local community. Pupils are confident and articulate. They said that they enjoy coming to school.

Pupils benefit from very caring and trusting relationships with staff. Pupils, including children in the early years, follow the established rules and routines of the school well. They are attentive and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils behave well at breaktimes. They play games happily with their friends. As a result, the school is calm and purposeful.

The school is ambitious for pupils' academic achievement. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children in the early years, including those in the two-year-old provision, make a good start to their education. However, pupils in key stages 1 and 2 do not achieve as well as they should. They have gaps in their learning from the previous weaker curriculums. This is holding pupils back from building a secure body of knowledge over time.

Pupils develop their interests by attending clubs such as drama, gardening and choir. Their confidence grows by taking on leadership roles including class leader, happiness hero and junior safety officer. Members of the school council are proud to make a positive contribution to their local community. They select charities which are important to the school and carry out regular fundraising events.

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

The school wants the best for pupils, including those with SEND. Leaders have prioritised pupils' well-being. They have focused on pupils' long-term happiness and strong mental health. This includes the building of trusting relationships with families. Pupils want to come to school and this is reflected in their high attendance rates.

Children in the early years, including two-year-olds, benefit from a well-designed curriculum. They are eager to learn and to access the carefully chosen learning experiences that staff make available to them. Staff ensure that children, including those with SEND, achieve well. Children are well prepared to begin Year 1.

Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 do not build on their positive start in the early years as well as they should. Until recently, the school's curriculum lacked ambition. Consequently, too few pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 well prepared for the challenges of the key stage 3 curriculum.

The school has revised its curriculum in key stages 1 and 2. The curriculum is broad and ambitious. Typically, it provides teachers with the information that they need to know what subject content to teach and when this should happen. While the revised curriculums enable pupils to build their learning over time, some pupils do not

achieve academic success. This is because they have gaps in their knowledge as a result of the previous curriculum. These gaps have not been identified well enough or addressed effectively to help pupils to make the most of the new approach. This means that, in some subjects, pupils are being introduced to new concepts without secure earlier learning.

The delivery of the curriculum is mixed. At times, the activities that teachers design do not help pupils to learn the intended subject content.

The school encourages pupils to develop a love of reading from the early years. This begins in the two-year-old provision, where children enjoy rhymes and stories. In the Nursery class, children choose the books for story time by casting a vote. The school library has been overhauled. It is an inviting space for pupils to enjoy browsing and to choose a 'beautiful book' to take home. Older pupils talked with enthusiasm about the authors and books that they like.

Well-trained staff deliver the school's phonics programme effectively. Children in the Reception class learn to link sounds and letters. Pupils in key stage 1 build on this strong start. Regular checks enable staff to identify and help pupils in need of additional support. The books that pupils read are carefully matched to their phonics knowledge. This enables them to build confidence and become fluent readers by the end of key stage 1.

In contrast, the reading curriculum in key stage 2 is not well thought through. The school has attempted to make changes to the curriculum, but this has not been successful. There is insufficient guidance for teachers so that they know what they should teach and when they should teach it. This means that the gains that pupils make in key stage 1 are not built on during Years 3 to 6. As a result, pupils in key stage 2 do not achieve well in reading. This impacts on how well they are able to access the rest of the curriculum.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND accurately. Pupils receive the individual help that they need. Pupils with complex needs are well supported. Usually, pupils with SEND are able to access the curriculum alongside their friends when staff adapt their delivery of the curriculum. However, like other pupils in the school, pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should due to gaps in their previous learning.

The systems to check on the effectiveness of curriculum delivery and pupils' learning are underdeveloped. As a result, the school is not fully aware of where weaknesses lie. This makes it difficult to identify the right priorities for improvement and to ensure that staff receive appropriate training to help them to improve their practice.

The school's programme to promote pupils' personal development is well designed. Pupils learn the importance of keeping fit and eating healthy foods. They are taught how to have good mental health. For example, they learn how to control their breathing, which helps them to feel calm in difficult situations. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of relationships. For instance, pupils know how to

be a good friend. Pupils know why they vote for school council members. This helps them to understand how democracy works in Britain. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions. They know the importance of treating everyone equally.

Pupils, including children in early years, behave well in class. Around school, pupils are polite and courteous to visitors and to one another.

Governors are committed to their roles. However, they have an overly generous view of the school. As a result, governors do not give sufficient challenge to support the school to improve quickly enough.

Parents speak very highly of the school. They said that they are kept well informed about their children's progress and know how to support them at home.

The school considers staff workload when bringing about change. For example, staff are involved in the development of new initiatives. They are given time to complete additional tasks and, as a result, they feel valued and supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The reading curriculum in key stage 2 is not well thought through. It is unclear what pupils will learn and how they will develop their reading knowledge over time. As a result, pupils do not build on their secure knowledge of phonics to become fluent and accurate readers who can access the curriculum. This limits their readiness for key stage 3. The school should ensure that there is a clear curriculum to underpin pupils' progress towards becoming successful and confident readers.
- In some subjects, pupils do not learn as effectively as they should. This is because the activities that teachers design do not match the subject content of the curriculum well enough. The school should ensure that staff choose the right approaches to help pupils learn all that they should.
- In some subjects, weaknesses in the previous curriculums mean that some pupils have gaps in their learning. These are not identified or addressed effectively. As a result, pupils are introduced to new concepts without secure prior learning. This hinders their progress through the curriculum. The school should ensure that gaps in learning are identified and tackled so that pupils can keep pace with the new curriculums.
- The school and governors do not have effective enough systems to identify the weaknesses within the school's provision. As a result, the priorities for improvement are not focused closely enough to the key shortcomings. The school

should ensure that it develops the approach to evaluating the delivery of the curriculum and pupils' learning so that weaknesses are identified and addressed.

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	111282
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10289996
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	276
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Arwyn Jones
Headteacher	Nic Wetton
Website	www.malpasalportpri.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- There is provision for two-year-old children in the early years.

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 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 of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, including early reading, geography and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at a sample of pupils' books and spoke with pupils.
- An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, around school, at breaktimes and lunchtime. They discussed behaviour and bullying with pupils and staff.
- 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 considered the views of pupils and staff who responded to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents who responded to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text comments. In addition, inspectors spoke with parents in the morning at the school gate.
- Inspectors spoke with members of the governing body including the chair of governors, and scrutinised minutes of meetings.

Inspection team

Frith Murphy, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sandra Hamilton	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Davidson	Ofsted Inspector

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