

Inspection of a good school: Ormskirk Asmall Primary School

Tennyson Drive, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 3PJ

Inspection date: 22 November 2023

Outcome

Ormskirk Asmall Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this nurturing school. The school's values, such as kindness and respect, underpin the positive relationships that pupils have with each other and with adults. Pupils are thoughtful and well-mannered. They make everyone feel welcome.

Pupils behave well in lessons and at playtimes. They are considerate and care for one another. Pupils delight in the array of rewards that they receive for behaving well and working hard.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils enjoy learning and try their best. They typically achieve well and are ready for the next stage of their education.

Pupils take full advantage of the wide range of enrichment activities that the school provides for them beyond the academic curriculum. For example, pupils relish taking part in activities such as chess and computer coding club. Pupils in key stage 2 organise lunchtime activities for other pupils, such as drawing and dance clubs.

Pupils excel in their various roles and responsibilities. These include acting as school councillors and science ambassadors. Pupils welcome being involved in projects in the local community, such as litter picking. They enjoy performing with the school's choir at residential homes for older people and at the local church. These experiences contribute strongly to pupils' broader development.

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

Owing to a significant fire, the school has experienced considerable upheaval since it was last inspected. For example, pupils had to learn in temporary classrooms for a lengthy period while the school building was rebuilt. The school faced the many challenges that this disruption brought with fortitude. It made sure that it kept disturbance to pupils' education to a minimum while continuing to improve the curriculum.

The school has designed a well-organised curriculum that enables children in the early years and pupils in key stages 1 and 2 to build up their knowledge logically and securely in most subjects. However, in a small number of subjects and areas of learning in the early years, the essential knowledge that pupils need to know is not made clear. This means that some pupils do not gain the building blocks of knowledge that are crucial to their later learning.

Teachers typically deliver the curriculum well. In the main, they choose appropriate resources, activities and questions to help pupils learn. However, assessment strategies to check on pupils' knowledge and understanding in a few subjects are underdeveloped. On occasion, teachers are uncertain if pupils have gained the knowledge that they should. This sometimes hinders how well teachers design subsequent learning.

Pupils' individual needs, interests and talents are known well at this school. The school quickly and effectively identifies pupils' additional needs, including pupils with SEND. These pupils benefit from well-tailored support so that they can access the same curriculum as their peers.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Children in the early years enjoy their story times with their teachers and with their special Year 6 'buddies'. Older pupils look forward to the special time each day when adults read to them. Pupils learn to read through a well-thought-out phonics curriculum. This begins when children join the Reception Year. Staff have received training so that they deliver this curriculum effectively. As a result, most children in the Reception class and pupils in key stage 1 gain a secure knowledge of phonics.

The school supports pupils' personal development effectively. It takes every opportunity to ensure that pupils respect diversity. Pupils understand that there are many different types of families in society. Pupils relish taking part in a wide range of trips and visits. For example, they have opportunities to spend the night in a museum, ride on a steam train and visit a local university. Pupils also benefit from listening to the many visitors who are invited into school to talk to them, such as local authors and members of parliament. These experiences help to deepen pupils' learning and broaden their experiences.

The school and governing body are mindful of staff's workload and well-being when making decisions. For example, they consider how best to implement new initiatives without overburdening staff. Governors provide effective support and challenge to the school to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education.

The school provides useful guidance for parents on how best to support their children's learning at home. For example, 'come read with me' events and workshops about phonics help explain to parents how to help their children with reading.

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 has not given sufficient thought to the essential knowledge that pupils must learn and in what order this should be taught in a small number of subjects and areas of learning in the early years. Some pupils do not achieve as well as they should in these subjects. The school should refine its curriculum thinking so that teachers know exactly what pupils must learn and when this should be taught in these few remaining subjects.
- In a small number of subjects, the school's approaches to checking on pupils' knowledge and understanding are underdeveloped. On occasions, this stops teachers from being certain that pupils have gained the knowledge that they should before they introduce new learning. The school should determine how best to check that pupils have learned the intended curriculum. It should also ensure that teachers are suitably equipped to use assessment strategies with confidence and accuracy so that gaps in pupils' learning are identified and tackled quickly.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2018.

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	119314
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10314003
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	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jim Riley
Headteacher	Sarah Evans
Website	www.asmall.lancs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 December 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2023.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and

looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.

- 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 spoke with pupils in meetings and around the school at lunchtimes and breaktimes.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke with some parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed the online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Victoria Burnside, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kathy Nichol

Ofsted Inspector

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