

Inspection of Old Town Primary School

Billy Lane, Wadsworth, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 8RY

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Old Town Primary School. It is a school at the very heart of the community. Pupils are actively engaged in community life, whether performing locally as members of the large school choir or displaying their artwork in local exhibitions. Numerous volunteers from the community ably support the work of school staff.

Through a carefully planned and well-taught personal development curriculum, including an exciting range of guest speakers in assemblies, pupils develop a strong understanding of personal rights and responsibilities, the beliefs of different faiths and how to keep themselves safe. This aspect of their education is helping to shape their actions and views of the world. Pupils are considerate and respectful. Poor behaviour is very rare.

When pupils face challenges in their lives, they receive exceptional support to help them overcome these challenges. This support not only helps them to cope with the immediate challenges but also to develop resilience for future challenges in life. Pupils feel happy and well cared for. Families value the difference this support has made to their children, including on the very rare occasions when bullying has occurred in school.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), succeed both academically and personally at Old Town Primary School. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next steps of their lives. Parents unanimously recommend the school to others.

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

Leaders, including the early years leader and subject leaders, have carefully planned what pupils will learn. They have designed their curriculums to make sure that pupils do not have gaps in learning when the structure of mixed-age classes changes.

Teachers check what pupils already know and can do when starting a new topic. Teachers adjust their teaching appropriately. Pupils' learning is exceptional across a wide range of subjects. They have detailed knowledge and understanding of what they have studied. Pupils can talk confidently about what they have learned in previous years. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were able to give a detailed explanation of how Britain changed from the Stone Age to the Iron Age. Pupils achieve highly in national assessments. Staff support pupils with SEND very effectively. They achieve highly. An unusually high number of pupils join the school between Years 3 and 6. While not benefiting from the exceptional education for the full seven years, these pupils learn very effectively.

Subject leaders monitor the effectiveness of provision in their areas carefully. They check that pupils are learning new topics well, and that they can remember

important learning from previous years. When subject leaders identify the potential for improvement, they make adjustments to the curriculum.

Reading is at the core of pupils' success. Phonics is taught from the very start of Reception. Leaders have ensured that, as Reception classes have increased in size, systems have developed to ensure that those who need extra help continue to receive it quickly. A carefully planned curriculum supports pupils to move from phonic decoding to fluent reading.

Teachers read to their classes daily. Books have been carefully selected to broaden pupils' reading experiences. Pupils benefit from an approach that rewards pupils for reading books from a wide range of genres, including historical fiction and poetry. Pupils across school read daily to adults.

From the very start of Reception, pupils learn about the different behaviour expectations that apply in different contexts. For example, pupils know why the expectations of how to behave in places of worship differ from those that apply in other places. Pupils get the opportunity to apply this learning through an extensive range of visits that complement what pupils are learning in lessons.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs. Leaders make sure that all pupils, irrespective of any challenges they face, are involved. For example, all pupils, including those with SEND, represent the school in sporting teams.

Leaders have strong systems to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. Staff in school know their pupils and their families very well. They are able to offer support for families, when needed. Pupils miss very little school as a result.

The 'reverse transition' events, such as the cross-country walk for former pupils now in Year 7, allow leaders to check on the welfare of their former pupils and gain an understanding of how well they have settled into their new schools. Leaders use this information to make improvements to their personal development and subject curriculums.

Governors have a detailed understanding of the school. They ensure that their systems for gathering information about the school are effective but do not place an unnecessary burden on staff, all of whom have many different roles across school. Leaders have developed a culture where everyone involved in school, including volunteers, feels empowered to challenge the way things are done and suggest improvements. This approach ensures that the school is always improving, so pupils in school get an exceptional education. Staff feel highly valued by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	107524
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10289935
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	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Graham Codd
Headteacher	Jo Buckley
Website	http://www.oldtown.calderdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 July 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the leader in charge of the personal development curriculum, the designated safeguarding lead, the pastoral leader, a group of governors, and the local authority school effectiveness officer.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentary information, including school policies, school self-evaluation records, records of behaviour and bullying, minutes of governing body meetings and information regarding safeguarding processes.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors looked at aspects of provision in science and history, including speaking to pupils about their learning and looking at pupil work.
- Inspectors visited the after-school club and observed pupils at social times and when moving around the school.
- Inspectors spoke to teachers, teaching assistants, support staff and school volunteers over the course of the inspection and considered the responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the end of the school day and reviewed the responses to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View. This included any free-text responses.
- Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils and spoke to others informally throughout the inspection. They considered the responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Steve Wren, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Katy Cox

Ofsted Inspector

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