

Inspection of Meadowbank Primary School & Children's Centre

Formby Avenue, Atherton, Manchester M46 0HX

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a calm and happy school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), feel safe because of the positive relationships that they have with staff and their many friends. They know that they can speak with staff if they are ever worried about life at home or school. Staff avoid raising their voice and instead give pupils gentle reminders about how to behave. Pupils behave sensibly.

Pupils experience a school that works effectively to feel homely. It is a place where they want to be and they like the mock fireplace burning away in the school hall. Elsewhere in the school, pupils and staff can access some places to sit and relax with low lighting and comfortable chairs. Pupils appreciate the gentle presence of the school therapy dog.

Pupils, including those with SEND in the specially resourced provision (resourced provision), settle quickly with skilful staff who get to know their needs in detail. In the Nursery class and in the other classes, pupils enjoy their learning. Pupils achieve well reflecting the school's high expectations.

Pupils benefit from taking part in extra activities such as cheerleading, choir and sign language.

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

The school has adopted and refined a clear and ambitious curriculum for pupils from early years to Year 6. Staff have secure subject knowledge and deliver the curriculum successfully. They use assessment strategies skilfully to check pupils' learning. Mostly, pupils learn and achieve well in different subjects. In the resourced provision, for example, staff expertly help those pupils who have limited language to also develop their communication skills in other ways.

Pupils remember well the work that they have learned recently. This is because staff make lessons interesting. However, in a few subjects, staff do not help pupils well enough to commit some of what they have been taught to their long-term memory.

Pupils at the early stages of learning to read, including in the Reception Year, learn phonics well. The highly trained staff make phonics understandable and relevant. Pupils who need extra help with learning phonics are given the practice and explanations that they need. Pupils become confident, fluent readers.

Staff identify with precision the words that they will teach to pupils in different subjects. This helps pupils to understand important concepts and ideas. For instance, in the Nursery class, children learned the word 'rickety' for a bridge in a story. Staff linked their teaching to words that the children already knew, such as 'wobbly'. Children develop a love of new words.

The school's ambitious reading curriculum includes the use of high-quality fiction and non-fiction books, that staff select carefully. This includes poetry. Starting in the Nursery class, staff read stories often to children. They do so with skill and enthusiasm. Pupils talk about their favourite stories knowledgeably. Older pupils understand and recall the complex themes of books that staff read to them.

The unvalidated outcomes for pupils' attainment in reading in Year 6 in 2023 were significantly below average. Some pupils in upper key stage 2 do not have a well-developed knowledge of different authors' works, even though staff share with them a wide range of literature. This weakness does not reflect the achievements in reading of many other current pupils at the school. Many pupils learn to read well because the school focuses determinedly on improving reading in the early years and key stages 1 and 2.

In the early years, the school identifies and supports the unique needs of each child, including children with SEND. It works with other agencies, schools and parents and carers to focus effectively on children's needs. This successful work continues throughout the school. As a result, pupils with SEND, including in the resourced provision, flourish.

Pupils behave well. However, some pupils do not attend school as much as they should. The school is taking the action necessary to address this issue. For instance, it identifies concerns about pupils' attendance promptly. The school spots patterns in pupils' absences. It acts on information to ensure that pupils come to school more often. It is improving attendance successfully, including by working with other agencies and parents.

The school develops pupils' strong sense of human values, including of right and wrong. They learn important information about diverse aspects of modern British culture. Pupils with SEND feel respected and that this school is a place that they belong.

The governing body holds leaders to account for the work of the school effectively. For instance, it evaluates the success of support for pupils with SEND in the resourced provision. The school has freed staff from some unnecessary paperwork, by providing online apps to help with their work. This approach has enabled staff to have more time to focus on their delivery of the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, the school does not help pupils to remember their earlier learning. This means that it does not build some of pupils' learning well from their existing

knowledge. The school should help pupils to build knowledge based on their prior learning and to remember what they have been taught.

- The school does not make sure that some pupils, in upper key stage 2, know enough about the work of a wide range of authors. This affects pupils' ability to talk about a wide range of literature. The school should make certain that pupils develop a wide reading knowledge by the time that they leave for secondary school.

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	106425
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10241886
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michael Tye
Headteacher	Nichola Hill
Website	www.athertonmeadowbankblogs.net
Date of previous inspection	23 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school's provision includes 12 places in a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. The pupils have a range of needs, including communication and interaction, cognition, learning, behaviour and sensory needs.
- The number of pupils at the school with SEND is significantly above average.
- The school does not use alternative provision for pupils.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club for pupils.
- Some senior leaders were new to their roles in September 2023.

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 these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with the school and pupils.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to familiar staff. He spoke with some pupils about reading.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, including pupils with SEND, and asked them about their experiences of the school. They considered the responses from pupils to the Ofsted online survey.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- The inspectors reviewed responses from staff to the Ofsted online survey. They spoke with some staff about their work at the school.
- The lead inspector met with some members of the governing body, one of whom attended the meeting remotely.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and the school's improvement partner.
- 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.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Liz Dayton

Ofsted Inspector

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