

Inspection of Medlock Valley Primary School

Deanshut Road, Fitton Hill, Oldham, Greater Manchester OL8 2PN

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 February 2024

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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The head of school is Joanne Backhouse. This school is part of Kingfisher Learning 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), Anne Redmond, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen Crabtree. There is also an executive principal, Lisa Needham, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school are happy. The school's values underpin the positive way that pupils treat adults and one another. The school has high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those who are disadvantaged, live up to these expectations. Typically, pupils achieve well.

When they join the school, some pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. In addition, most children in the early years are in the early stages of language development. These pupils receive effective support to develop their vocabulary and spoken English successfully.

There is little or no disruption to lessons or day-to-day school life. Pupils are attentive in lessons, and they work hard. They are confident that staff will swiftly resolve any concerns that they may have. Pupils, including children in the early years, value the strong relationships that they have with supportive staff.

Pupils enjoy the variety of enrichment activities that the school offers. For example, they are keen to attend sewing, swimming and art clubs. The school carefully tailors its clubs to suit the needs and interests of pupils, including those with SEND and those who access the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision). This helps to develop pupils' wider talents and interests beyond the academic curriculum.

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

The school has established a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum for pupils, including those with SEND. Careful thought has been given as to which key knowledge and skills should be taught and when this will happen. This includes pupils taught in the mixed-age classes.

Staff are well equipped to design activities that enable pupils to learn the curriculum well. Staff benefit from high-quality training. This helps them to deliver the curriculum as intended.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and try their best to succeed. However, some subject curriculums are relatively new. As a result, pupils have not had time to benefit from these strengthened curriculums and have gaps in their knowledge.

The school has prioritised early reading. Staff are well trained to deliver the phonics programme with confidence and expertise. From the start of the Reception Year, children learn sounds in a logical order. Pupils practise reading with books that are well matched to the sounds that they have learned. The school ensures that any pupils who find reading difficult get the extra support that they need to catch up quickly with their phonics knowledge. Most pupils learn to read fluently. However, a

minority of pupils do not read as regularly as they should. As a result, these pupils do not receive the practice that they need to become competent readers.

The school successfully promotes reading for enjoyment. Children in the Nursery Year listen to engaging stories and develop their communication and language skills. Older pupils describe their favourite books and authors eagerly.

The school has effective systems in place to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Staff work collaboratively with parents and carers, the local authority and other external agencies to secure appropriate support for pupils. Staff skilfully adapt the delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils, including pupils in the specially resourced provision. Staff provide strong encouragement to pupils with SEND so that they become increasingly independent young people.

Pupils, including children in the early years, consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They are friendly and well mannered. Most pupils attend school every day. Where pupils' absence causes concern, the school puts effective, rigorous strategies in place. This improves most pupils' attendance over time.

The school offers a variety of experiences to support pupils' personal development. For example, pupils raise money to support local charities. The school actively celebrates the diverse range of languages and religions that pupils and their families bring. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of differences, and they embrace each other's cultures. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and how to stay physically healthy. They have a secure knowledge of fundamental British values. Pupils pride themselves on making everyone feel welcome in their school.

Governors support school leaders while holding them to account for the quality of education that pupils receive. Both governors and trustees are committed to nurturing talent and retaining staff.

Staff were overwhelmingly positive about how leaders take their workload into consideration. Staff enjoy working with colleagues across the trust to improve their subject knowledge and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject curriculums are relatively new to the school. As a result, pupils have not had time to benefit from these well-designed curriculums and have gaps in their knowledge. The school should ensure that teachers are suitably equipped to deliver the curriculum consistently well.

- A few pupils do not read regularly enough. This hinders their progress in learning to read and how well these pupils access the wider curriculum. The school should ensure that pupils receive regular opportunities to practise their reading so that they become confident, fluent readers.

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	147453
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10294419
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	319
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Crabtree
CEO of the trust	Anne Redmond
Headteacher	Lisa Needham, Executive Principal Joanne Backhouse, Head of School
Website	www.medlockvalley.oldham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Kingfisher Learning Trust.
- The executive principal was appointed in September 2019.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for up to 12 pupils aged between five and 11. The local authority commissions places for pupils with needs including speech, language and communication needs; social, emotional and mental health needs and autism. There are currently 12 pupils in the specially resourced provision. All pupils in the provision have an education, health and care plan.
- The governors provide a breakfast club for pupils.

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 met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. They also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. Meetings were held with the CEO and members of the trust, including the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English and early reading, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, they 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 observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects. They met with leaders, spoke with pupils and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects.
- 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 looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school. Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Ruth Moran, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Michelle Ridsdale	Ofsted Inspector
Lisa Whittaker	Ofsted Inspector

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