

Inspection of a good school: Heswall St Peter's CofE Primary School

Thurstaston Road, Heswall, Wirral, Merseyside CH60 4SA

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 February 2024

Outcome

Heswall St Peter's CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to belong to this caring school community. They are supported to build firm foundations which enable them to be 'shining bright' during their time at school. Older pupils act as welcoming buddies to younger children when they join the school. This helps pupils to make friends easily and to learn routines quickly.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), rise to the school's high expectations of their achievement and behaviour. Most pupils achieve well. They also behave well and are kind to each other.

Pupils spoke positively about the recent introduction of 'be ready, be safe, be respectful' as their new school rules. They said that these rules help them to be the best that they can be. Pupils are proud to receive rewards, for example the star of the week smiley badges and sashes, in recognition of their positive behaviour and hard work.

By taking on roles of responsibility, pupils learn how to contribute to the success of their school. For example, pupils spoke about recent changes to the lunch menu because of work by the school council.

Pupils benefit from opportunities to engage with their community and the wider world. For instance, the eco-team arranges local litter picks. Pupils also support charities and local refugee families.

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

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to leadership at all levels of the school. The school has managed these changes well. It has taken decisive action to prioritise the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. The ambition for outcomes for pupils, including those with SEND, has increased. The school has given careful thought to what pupils should learn from the early years to Year 6.

The school has recently redesigned its curriculums in subjects other than English and mathematics. The content of these curriculums has been thoughtfully designed to help pupils in the mixed-age classes to build knowledge logically over time. Generally, pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Nonetheless, the improved curriculums in these subjects have only recently been introduced. This means that some older pupils have not benefited from these improved curriculums over time. These pupils have gaps in aspects of their knowledge in a few subjects.

In lessons, staff explain new content clearly to pupils. They use assessment information well to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and to check for misconceptions. Increasingly, teachers devise activities to encourage pupils to recall recent learning. However, in some subjects, the school has not identified clearly enough the most important subject-specific concepts that pupils should learn and revisit. In these subjects, staff do not routinely check that pupils can recall and connect newer learning with prior knowledge. This means that, from time to time, some pupils struggle to remember some key information in the longer term.

A new phonics programme has been introduced with success. Staff have received suitable training so that they can support pupils to learn to identify and blend sounds with confidence. Two- and three-year-olds in the Nursery Year, confidently recite rhymes and join in with songs. This helps to prepare them for their phonics learning from the beginning of the Reception Year.

Pupils read books that match the sounds that they know. Those pupils who struggle to keep up with the phonics programme are swiftly provided with extra support. This means that most pupils quickly develop the knowledge that they need to read with fluency and accuracy.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. Teachers are provided with up-to-date information on the learning needs of individual pupils. Teachers use this information well to make sure that this group of pupils can successfully access the same curriculum as their classmates.

Pupils benefit from the clear and consistent routines that the school has established for behaviour. In the Nursery and Reception classes, the youngest children listen attentively. These positive attitudes to behaviour are built on throughout the school.

The school has identified the reasons for the low attendance rates of some pupils. It has taken effective action to provide support for these pupils and their families. As a result, pupils' rates of attendance are improving.

The school prioritises opportunities for pupils to develop their moral and social awareness. Pupils readily remember their learning about different faiths, cultures and types of families.

Governors understand what the school does well and what further improvements need to be made. The school recognises that the recent turbulence in leadership and significant changes to the curriculum have been unsettling for staff. To this end, the school has taken

appropriate steps to alleviate the impact of workload on staff's well-being and to better support staff across the school. Staff feel valued and they are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few areas of the school's curriculum have recently been redesigned. As a result, some older pupils have not benefited from these improved curriculums over time. This means that, in these subjects, some older pupils have gaps in their knowledge. The school should support teachers to identify and address these gaps in pupils' knowledge to ensure that pupils are fully prepared for the next stage in their education.
- In some subjects, the school has not clearly identified the most important subject-specific concepts that pupils need to learn securely. As a result, in these subjects, some pupils do not remember important prior knowledge. The school should ensure that teachers are clear about which key concepts to teach in each subject and when to revisit them, so that pupils know and remember more over time.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2014.

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	105079
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10321259
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	304
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Dowler
Headteacher	Michael Parry (acting headteacher)
Website	www.stpeters-heswall.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- An acting headteacher and an acting deputy headteacher have been in post since January 2023.
- A new chair of governors was elected in September 2023 after joining the governing body in May 2023.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Chester. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in March 2023. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place between 2027 and 2028.
- There is provision for two-year-olds in the Nursery.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternate provider.

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 that the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken this into account in her evaluation.
- The inspector conducted deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 inspector spoke with subject leaders and some pupils about their learning in some other subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils from key stages 1 and 2 reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector spoke with the acting headteacher. She also spoke with other school leaders.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority. She also spoke with a representative of the diocese and a representative of the alternative provision the school currently uses.
- The inspector talked with staff and leaders about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector met with the leaders responsible for behaviour, SEND provision and pupils' wider development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their experiences at school. She looked at a range of policies and documents relating to pupils' welfare and education. She also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- The inspector met with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Rebecca Jewitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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