

Inspection of Oakdene Primary School

Ashton Avenue, Rainhill, Prescot, Merseyside L35 0QQ

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 March 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	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 11 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to attend this school. They strive to live up to the school values each and every day. Pupils benefit from kind and trusting relationships with staff and each other. This helps them to feel safe and happy.

Pupils behave very well. They are fully aware of the rewards and consequences of the choices that they make. Children in the Reception Year quickly learn the routines and rules, which help them to learn well in school. Year 6 buddies act as role models to younger pupils and relish the opportunity to share a book with them during lunchtime.

The school is ambitious for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are keen to learn and they make the most of the learning opportunities afforded to them. Typically, pupils achieve well across most areas of the curriculum.

Pupils welcome the range of leadership opportunities that are available to them. For example, pupils, who work as value leaders and school councillors, are proud to assist in the charity events that take place in school. They understand that such actions help to support others in their local community.

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

The school has established an ambitious and well-ordered curriculum. Across subjects, teachers know what they need to teach and when they should teach it. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils including those with SEND. Effective strategies are in place to ensure that any pupils' additional needs are identified swiftly. Careful adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum ensure that pupils with SEND learn alongside their peers. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

The school provides high-quality training so that teachers, for the most part, deliver the curriculum confidently. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to explain new learning clearly to pupils. Added to this, teachers typically design activities to enable pupils to remember the curriculum.

In the vast majority of subjects, teachers use assessment information to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and to check their understanding. However, in a very small number of subjects, assessment is not used as well to check on what pupils know. This hinders some pupils from building their knowledge securely over time.

Reading sits at the centre of the school's curriculum. From the moment children enter the Reception class, their interest in books is cultivated. They listen to stories and rhymes and talk about their favourite characters in familiar tales. Phonics teaching begins as soon as the children begin school. They quickly learn the sounds that individual letters make. Well-trained staff deliver the phonics programme effectively. The books that pupils read are closely matched to the sounds that they

know. This enables pupils to become confident, fluent readers by the time they leave Year 2. For those pupils who find reading more difficult, effective support is put in place to ensure that they catch up quickly. Around school, books are displayed to attract and create an interest in reading.

During their time in key stage 2, pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. Book corners in classrooms are cosy spaces, where books can be enjoyed. Daily dedicated reading time is appreciated by pupils who said that they relish the prospect of 'getting lost in a book'. Pupils can discuss the books that they have read. They know that reading helps them to learn new words that they can use in their own writing.

Pupils are considerate, polite and respectful. Across the school, they are enthusiastic about the opportunities which each day brings. They have positive attitudes to their learning. This means that they learn without interruptions. Pupils' positive conduct extends beyond the classroom. They follow routines to make sure that school is a calm and pleasant place to be. Older pupils willingly act as role models. They are generous with their time and keen to support others in the school.

A high priority is placed on ensuring pupils attend school as often as they should. The school has effective systems in place to help those pupils and families who may need support. Pupils' attendance is high.

The school has developed a well-thought-out programme to support pupils' wider development. Pupils understand how to keep themselves healthy and safe, both physically and mentally. They are taught about the dangers of using the internet.

A range of trips and visitors into school enhance the curriculum. Themed events such as Black History Month are celebrated. This deepens pupils' respect for others in the world. Themed days are planned through the year to enhance the curriculum and bring it to life, 'Book and breakfast' is popular among parents and carers. It allows them time to come into school and share a book with their child. The school makes effective links with the community. For example, 'Dreamcatcher' assemblies harness the expertise from parents, carers and the wider community. It enables pupils to learn about a range of careers that they may consider in the future.

Governors know the school well. They hold leaders to account effectively and make sure that the curriculum is of high quality. They are committed to the school's continued improvement.

The school considers staff's workload and well-being when making decisions. For example, staff appreciate the time given to them to complete any additional work. As a result, staff feel well supported to carry out their roles effectively. Parents and carers are also positive about the work of the school and hold it in high regard.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, teachers do not use assessment information as well as they could to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. This hinders some pupils when they come to apply their knowledge to more complex tasks. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, staff are equipped to identify gaps in pupils' learning so that pupils can build on prior knowledge more effectively.

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	104781
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10313961
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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Forester
Headteacher	Lynsey Young
Website	www.oakdeneprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 November 2012, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2023.
- A new chair of governors has been appointed since last inspection.
- The school provides a before- and after-school provision for its pupils.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.

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 any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She 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 discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, and spoke to teachers and with some pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils reading with 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 observed pupils' behaviour at various times in the school day. This included during lessons as well as at playtime.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents and carers in their responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors spoke with parents as they collected their children from school at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Pat Speed, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Elaine Jackson

Ofsted Inspector

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