

Inspection of a good school: Walton-le-Dale Community Primary School

Severn Drive, Walton-le-Dale, Preston, Lancashire PR5 4TD

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 March 2024

Outcome

Walton-le-Dale Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy in this school. They enjoy their learning. They rise to the school's high expectations and achieve well. From the early years upwards, staff develop warm, caring relationships with children. They foster a nurturing environment that helps pupils to thrive, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils behave well. They enjoy receiving recognition such as certificates and house points that celebrate their successes. Pupils are typically kind and caring to each other. They have an appreciation of each other's differences and do not tolerate any form of discrimination. At playtimes, pupil leaders organise games and sports activities for their peers to enjoy. Anti-bullying ambassadors keep a close watch on the buddy bench to ensure that nobody is left out of the fun.

Pupil voice is integral to the school's ongoing work to develop and improve. For example, the pupil well-being group has helped staff to develop 'zen zones' in classrooms to help pupils to regulate their own behaviour. Many older pupils told the inspector that they value the opportunity to take a short time-out in these spaces if they feel upset or overwhelmed. They said that this helps them to get back on track quickly.

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

Leaders and governors share an ambitious vision for pupils' education. They have an accurate understanding of the school's current strengths and use it well to plan for improvement.

The school has carefully considered the wide range of knowledge that pupils should acquire. It has thought beyond the national curriculum, identifying the great thinkers and cultural experiences that pupils should encounter so that they are well prepared for their next steps. The school ensures that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, benefit fully from its high-quality curriculum.

Staff value the school's commitment to their professional development. Regular training and coaching are highly effective in developing staff's teaching expertise. The school's approach to curriculum design ensures that staff know precisely what to teach and when. Staff value the wealth of well-developed shared resources that reduce their workload and further pupils' learning.

Staff are adept at checking pupils' learning. This allows them to spot and address swiftly any emerging misconceptions before they become embedded. However, in some subjects, the school's approach to helping pupils to remember their learning over time is in the early stages of development. Consequently, some pupils find it difficult to remember their past learning and link it to new knowledge.

The school places a high priority on reading. Pupils value the array of texts that they encounter as part of the curriculum and the stories which they enjoy sharing with their teachers. Staff have thoughtfully selected these texts to allow pupils to have experience of a range of age-appropriate historical, social and cultural perspectives.

Starting in the Reception class, pupils swiftly develop their competence in reading. They benefit from a highly effective phonics programme that systematically increases their phonics knowledge. Staff ensure that pupils benefit from regular opportunities to practise their reading using appropriately targeted books. Pupils that require additional support with reading are quickly identified. They receive the help that they need to develop their knowledge and fluency.

The school quickly finds out the needs of pupils with SEND. It ensures that staff have the expertise to support them well. This means that these pupils can enjoy participating successfully in all aspects of school life.

The school is quick to identify any pupils with declining attendance and acts swiftly to pinpoint and address the root cause of any ongoing absence. Its tenacious work ensures that pupils, and particularly the most vulnerable pupils, are rarely absent.

Staff foster an exceptionally positive environment for learning within classrooms. They have established a culture of praise which reinforces with pupils the high standards of behaviour that they expect. In the early years, staff establish strong routines that help children to feel safe, secure and confident in their learning and play.

The school's work to promote pupils' wider development is very strong. Pupils develop a strong understanding of British values such as democracy, which is enhanced through a visit to London to see the nation's capital and seat of government. The school is determined to broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils learn about different religious and cultural festivals, as well as celebrating British cultural traditions, for example when going on a theatre trip to see a pantomime.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, pupils find it difficult to remember what they have learnt in the past. As a result, some struggle to connect new knowledge to what they have learned before, which hinders their development of a broad body of knowledge. The school should ensure that pupils remember and develop their learning 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 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	119286
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10294311
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	432
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Vickie Cunningham
Headteacher	Christopher Shields
Website	www.wldps.com
Date of previous inspection	31 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of the school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, including the headteacher, and a range of staff. She also spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She had a discussion with the independent school-improvement partner.
- The inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans and minutes of meetings of the governing body. She also reviewed records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.

- 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 of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. She observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in art and design, early reading and mathematics. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some teachers and pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with leaders.
- The inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Charlotte Oles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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