

Inspection of an outstanding school: Grange Valley Primary School

Heyes Avenue, Haydock, St Helens, Merseyside WA11 0XQ

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 May 2024

Outcome

Grange Valley Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at Grange Valley Primary school. They receive an exceptional education. Pupils are happy and arrive full of smiles at the start of each school day. They enjoy coming to school. Pupils delight in everything that the school has to offer.

The school has remarkably high expectations for what all pupils should achieve across each area of the curriculum. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils achieve highly. Children in the early years are extremely well prepared for key stage 1, while pupils in Year 6 are more than ready for the challenges of the key stage 3 curriculum.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They understand the school rules and relish the praise and rewards that they receive for working hard and trying their best. Relationships are strong. Pupils are kind and caring. They look after one another. The school is a calm and harmonious place to learn and play.

Pupils excel in their various roles and responsibilities. These include acting as mini curriculum leaders, child governors and school councillors. Pupils are proud to share and celebrate their school's achievements, for example through composing and publishing a school magazine. No matter what the responsibility, pupils make a tangible contribution to all aspects of school life.

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

The school has developed a rich and aspirational curriculum. From the two-year-old provision to Year 6, the curriculum flows seamlessly. The school has ensured that the order of learning is clear. Staff know the important information that pupils should learn in each subject curriculum and when they should learn it.

Pupils with SEND access the same broad and ambitious curriculum as their peers. The school accurately identifies pupils' additional needs. It ensures that pupils with SEND receive the support and wider opportunities that they need to achieve exceptionally well.

Staff receive high-quality training that enables them to design learning activities with expertise. Staff are skilled at identifying any gaps in pupils' knowledge or misconceptions that they may have. They take the time to help pupils to address these issues so that they do not persist. Pupils are able to make strong connections between their existing knowledge and new learning. As a result, pupils achieve highly. They develop a deep body of subject knowledge across the curriculum.

The school has successfully put reading at the heart of everything that it does. Pupils relish reading the range of books that are available from the well-stocked library. They enjoy listening to adults enthusiastically read carefully chosen books to them at story times. The school ensures that the phonics programme is delivered effectively by well-trained staff. Staff swiftly identify those pupils who do not keep up with this programme and provide expert support to help them to catch up quickly. Pupils become fluent and confident readers as a result.

From the beginning of early years to Year 6, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere that enables pupils to focus completely on their lessons. There is a buzz about learning around the school. Children in the early years, including in the two-year-old provision, develop strong learning behaviours. Older pupils build securely on this positive start.

The school provides an exemplary range of opportunities to enhance pupils' broader development. Pupils, including pupils with SEND, have a wide and rich set of experiences. For example, pupils spoke excitedly about orienteering, camping and cycling, as well as residential trips and museum visits. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. They understand the concepts of democracy, respect and tolerance. Pupils recognise that rules are there to keep them safe. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governors have an accurate oversight of the school. They are committed to the success of every pupil and check on the school's work to achieve this ambition. When making decisions, the school is highly considerate of the impact on staff's workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in November 2016.

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	104774
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10240525
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	307
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Hornby
Headteacher	Dianne Holcroft
Website	www.grangevalley.st-helens.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors has been appointed.

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 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- The inspector met with governors, including the chair of governors. She met with a representative of the local authority.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these 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 observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at lunchtime.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector spoke with pupils during meetings and around school at lunchtime. She also reviewed responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also spoke with some parents during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Victoria Burnside, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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