Inspection of a good school: Discovery Academy

Porlock Avenue, Hattersley, Hyde SK14 3LE

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 July 2024

Outcome

Discovery Academy continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Beverley Oldham. This school is part of the Victorious Academies 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), Karen Burns, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andy Hodgkinson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Discovery Academy, where they are greeted warmly each morning by Obi, the school dog. They share positive and respectful relationships with staff and with their peers. Pupils know that staff are there to help them if they have any worries or concerns. This helps pupils to feel happy and ready to learn.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. This includes for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils try their best to live up to the high ambitions that the school has for them. They work hard during lessons and achieve well across the curriculum.

Most pupils require few reminders to maintain the school's high standards of behaviour. They behave well at social times. In the playground, pupils play happily together. They appreciate the opportunity to play sport, read books, build models or talk to their friends.

Pupils benefit from the range of opportunities that the school provides to promote their wider development. They appreciate the many clubs on offer, such as football, choir, sign language and dance. By taking on roles of responsibility, pupils learn how to contribute to the continued success of their school. For example, house and vice-captains help school events to run smoothly.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious. It is designed to incorporate the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn from the early years to Year 6. Careful thought has been

given to what pupils are expected to know by the end of each year. Teachers have the information and guidance that they need to help pupils to learn well.

The teaching of reading begins in the Nursery class, where children love to hear their favourite stories. They listen intently and join in with familiar words and phrases. Staff are well trained to deliver the phonics programme. Children in the Reception class, and pupils in key stage 1, are taught the letters and sounds that they need to build their reading knowledge. The books that pupils read are well matched to the sounds that they know. Most pupils become accurate readers.

Skilled staff provide timely support for those pupils who find reading more difficult. This helps these pupils to build their confidence in reading. However, some of these pupils have not benefited from sufficient opportunities to practise and apply their phonics knowledge in their reading. On occasion, this slows the pace at which they become fluent readers.

Staff check regularly that pupils remember what they learn. In the main, this helps pupils to build their knowledge across most subjects. Typically, teachers design learning that helps pupils to learn curriculum content successfully. However, from time to time, in a few subjects the activities that teachers select do not support pupils to make connections in their learning or understand new concepts sufficiently well. Occasionally, this hinders some pupils from learning as deeply as they could.

Pupils who have additional needs are identified swiftly. Staff are well trained to provide appropriate adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND can enjoy success. These pupils learn well alongside their peers.

The school prioritises attendance. It does all that it can to support pupils and their families to attend school regularly and on time. As a result, most pupils attend well.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. In the Nursery and Reception classes, even the youngest children listen attentively. These positive attitudes to behaviour are built on throughout the school. There are times when a small number of pupils get distracted from their learning. However, teachers deal with these occasions well and pupils quickly get back on track. Pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour receive appropriate and effective support from the school.

Pupils are supported to be active and responsible citizens. They learn how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy. Pupils learn about relationships and how to keep safe. For example, in assemblies, digital leaders share important messages and raise awareness of how to keep safe online. This enables pupils to feel confident to express and manage their feelings in readiness for life beyond school.

The trust works closely with the local governing body to hold the school to account for the quality of education that pupils receive. Trustees and governors are mindful of the importance of staff well-being when making changes and they ensure that staff workload is reduced wherever possible. Staff appreciate the support offered by the trust and they enjoy working 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)

- The school does not provide sufficient opportunities for a small number of pupils who find it more difficult to read to practise their phonics knowledge. On occasion, some of these pupils do not develop fluency in reading as quickly as they could. The school should provide regular opportunities for these pupils to practise their phonics knowledge so that they can become fluent and confident readers.
- Now and then, in a few subjects, some teachers do not choose activities that support pupils to build their knowledge securely over time. As a result, a small number of pupils do not learn as deeply as they could. The school should ensure that staff are fully equipped to design learning that deepens pupils' knowledge in these subjects.

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 June 2019.

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	140428
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10348297
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andy Hodgkinson
CEO of trust	Karen Burns
Principal	Beverley Oldham
Website	www.discoveryacademyhyde.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club for pupils.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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 her evaluation of the school.
- 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 and open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a sample of pupils' work, spoke with teachers and talked with pupils about their learning.
- The inspector observed pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders. She also met with members of the local governing body.
- The inspector met with representatives of the trust, including the CEO. She also spoke with representatives of the local authority. 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.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour as they arrived at school and during lessons and at breaktimes. She also spoke with pupils about their views of school life.
- The inspector considered the views of parents and carers. She looked at the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She spoke to parents at the start of the school day. The inspector also considered emails sent for her attention.
- The inspector considered the views of staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's staff and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Frith Murphy, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector

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