

Inspection of Higher Failsworth Primary School

Stansfield Road, Failsworth, Oldham, Greater Manchester M35 9EA

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 July 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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils were overwhelmingly positive about this school. They described it as 'a kind, welcoming and caring school' where each and every one of them matters. Pupils, including children in the early years, are happy. They said that they feel safe because teachers really care about them.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. They are kind and considerate. Pupils display impeccable manners. They are highly respectful to one another and to staff. The school knows the needs of each pupil well. It provides effective support to those pupils who find it more difficult to manage their emotions.

The school is ambitious for what pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), should learn. More recently, the school has taken the necessary steps to create a culture of high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils apply themselves to their learning diligently and, typically, they achieve well.

The school provides pupils with a rich range of experiences that enhance their learning. For example, pupils go on a variety of visits to the local area and further afield. They enjoy representing the school, for example in sporting competitions and the local choral speaking festival.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has wasted no time in improving its curriculum. However, while these changes have been successful, current published data does not reflect the strengths of the school. In 2023, pupils' attainment in some subjects was significantly below national averages. Nonetheless, current pupils are benefiting from the strengthened curriculum, and most achieve well.

The school has a suitably ambitious curriculum and leaders have identified the essential knowledge that pupils should learn. Most staff demonstrate strong subject knowledge. In many subjects, staff give clear explanations when introducing new topics and concepts, using subject-specific vocabulary as appropriate. Staff routinely check what pupils have remembered.

In a minority of subjects, a few staff do not choose learning activities that enable pupils to understand new curriculum content as well as they should. On occasion, this hinders how well pupils learn in these subjects.

The school has ensured that staff have the confidence and expertise to carry out their leadership roles effectively. There is a clear programme in place to monitor the impact of the curriculum. However, this is in the early stages of implementation. As a result, in a small number of subjects, the school does not have sufficient oversight of how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. Staff are well trained to meet the needs of these pupils. Staff work closely with external agencies, and with parents and carers, to support pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum. These pupils build positive relationships with others and achieve well.

The school's approach to reading is well structured. Staff swiftly identify any pupil who is not keeping up with the phonics programme. The school puts appropriate support in place so that these pupils develop secure reading knowledge alongside their peers. Most become confident, fluent readers.

The school prioritises the teaching of reading. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the texts and poems that they study. They enjoy recommending books to their peers. Pupils appreciate the rewards that they receive for reading.

The school has a well-thought-out behaviour system that is understood well by all pupils. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. This includes children in the early years. Across the school, pupils try their best. They listen to their teachers and work harmoniously together. Pupils are very sensible and courteous when they move around school.

A key priority for the school has been to improve pupils' historically low rates of attendance, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils. The school has successfully pinpointed the reasons why some pupils struggled to attend school regularly. They have used this information to provide targeted support to pupils and their families. This includes support from a wealth of external partners when necessary. The school's work is starting to have an impact on improving pupils' rates of attendance.

The school places a very strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. Pupils value cultural diversity. They have an impressive understanding of fundamental British values, for example liberty and democracy. Pupils are respectful of the ways in which people are different. They enjoy taking part in debates when they engage with different views.

Pupils experience many opportunities to enhance their personal development. They develop a keen sense of responsibility through a variety of elected roles, such as the leadership team, school council representatives and librarians. Pupils are proud of what they achieve in these roles, for example when they organise the Christmas fair.

Members of the governing body provide valuable support and challenge to the school to ensure that the education it provides has a positive impact on pupils.

Staff are highly positive about the support and consideration that they receive for their workload and well-being.

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 minority of subjects, some staff do not select activities that support pupils to learn the knowledge in the curriculum sufficiently well. On occasion, this hinders how well pupils make sense of new learning. The school should ensure that staff are equipped to design learning that supports pupils to acquire knowledge well so that they know and remember more across the curriculum.
- In a few subjects, the school's processes for monitoring the impact of the curriculum are in the early stages of implementation. This prevents the school from having an in-depth understanding of how well pupils are learning. The school should ensure that the monitoring processes in these subjects provide staff with sufficient information about how well pupils are learning and where adjustments to the curriculum may be necessary.

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	134784
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10321412
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	449
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Robinson
Headteacher	Samantha Forster
Website	www.higher-failsworth.oldham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 February 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school provides a before-school club for pupils.
- Since the last inspection, a new chair of governors has been appointed.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum,

visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors spoke with subject leaders and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with staff and leaders about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for attendance, behaviour, early years, the provision for pupils with SEND and pupils' personal development.
- 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 spoke with pupils about their wider experiences of school. They looked at a range of documents related to pupils' welfare and education. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils. An inspector met with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents provided by school leaders and staff. This included the school development plan and records of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Lisa Littler, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Gower-Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Samantha Birchall	Ofsted Inspector

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