

Inspection of a good school: Seymour Road Academy

Seymour Road South, Manchester M11 4PR

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 July 2024

Outcome

Seymour Road Academy continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Debbie Frater. The school is part of the Wise Owl 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), Sophie Murfin, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by James Battle.

What is it like to attend this school?

Seymour Road Academy is a warm and embracing community that helps pupils to thrive both academically and socially. Pupils relish their time at school. They arrive each morning keen to learn new knowledge and to see their friends.

Pupils are polite to their classmates, their teachers and to visitors who come to the school. The school's 'respect' values underpin this. Pupils behave well in lessons. Staff use the 'Star' approach consistently well to support many pupils to engage in their learning, which they do well. Pupils benefit from exceptionally positive, caring relationships with the adults in school.

The school is ambitious for pupils' achievement. It expects the best from and for its pupils. Overall, many pupils achieve well across a range of subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. They are fully included in the wider life of the school.

Pupils are proud of their 'Respect Parliament'. They take their responsibilities on this committee very seriously. They value that the school has given them a voice in how to improve the school for their fellow pupils. For example, they have helped to purchase some extra equipment for the playground.

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

The school has a highly impressive curriculum. It, alongside the multi-academy trust, has taken thoughtful, careful decisions around the curriculum content. Small steps of

knowledge are identified clearly from the early years through to Year 6. These steps of knowledge are carefully ordered so that pupils, including pupils with SEND, have opportunities throughout their time in school to revisit knowledge. Staff receive relevant, up-to-date training. This means that they are skilled in delivering the curriculum. Typically, lessons involve pupils learning subject-specific vocabulary. Often, they use this new vocabulary in their explanations in their oral and written work. In many subject areas, pupils achieve well.

Staff explain new learning clearly and engagingly. They use different assessment strategies to anticipate common gaps or errors in pupils' understanding. For example, staff use targeted questioning to gauge pupils' knowledge and understanding of recent and prior learning. In many instances, teachers use these strategies well to know what pupils have remembered. However, from time to time, these are not used as effectively. In these instances, teachers do not identify what a few pupils have remembered. This means that these pupils are sometimes moved on to new learning too quickly before they have fully grasped prior content. This affects how well these pupils can build on their prior learning.

In the early years and the wider school, pupils have opportunities to develop their writing skills. However, on occasions, some of these skills are not embedded enough for a minority of pupils to use them accurately. From time to time, a few pupils do not use accurate grammar or punctuation in their writing. Sometimes, teachers do not highlight this to pupils. This results in a few pupils falling into unhelpful writing habits. Where this occurs, it affects the quality of pupils' writing.

The school ensures that reading is a priority for staff, pupils, parents and carers. Teachers use the daily reading hour to expose pupils to an extensive range of literature. Pupils are enthusiastic about reading. The books that pupils read reflect different cultures and a range of backgrounds. Younger children begin to learn nursery rhymes and songs to get them used to hearing different sounds. When appropriate, the school has put into place a carefully designed phonics programme. Staff are well trained to deliver the scheme. They provide support for any pupils who find it difficult to keep up with the phonics programme. Pupils become confident and fluent readers by the time they leave key stage 1.

Staff in the early years support children to learn the school routines quickly. They support children to develop focus and perseverance on the task they are working on. This continues as pupils move through the school. Pupils have positive attitudes in lessons, so lessons are rarely disrupted. The school understands the reasons why some pupils find it difficult to come to school. It has put in place successful strategies to ensure that the vast majority of pupils attend school regularly.

Staff ensure that they successfully identify any additional learning needs for pupils with SEND. They put into place appropriate support strategies to ensure that these pupils can access the curriculum. Typically, pupils with SEND achieve well from their starting points.

Pupils benefit from many opportunities beyond the classroom that support their wider development. These include many trips or visitors to school that support their learning in

different subjects. The school's bespoke 'WOW' programme supports pupils' mental well-being. From the early years, pupils learn about different fundamental British values. For example, in early years, children learn about democracy through voting for different activities. Pupils understand mutual respect and tolerance exceptionally well.

Trustees and the governing body understand what the school does well and where further improvements are needed. They support and challenge the school in equal measure. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about how the school supports their workload. For example, recent changes to the school's marking policy mean that teachers focus more on providing effective verbal feedback to pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- From time to time, some teachers do not use the school's assessment strategies effectively. This means that they are sometimes not sure what pupils have retained from their prior learning. Pupils occasionally encounter new learning before they are ready. The school should ensure that teachers use assessment strategies with more consistency to identify any potential gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- A minority of pupils do not have a secure enough grasp of grammar or punctuation conventions. This means that they do not, at times, use these accurately in their writing. This affects how well their writing communicates their intended meaning. The school should ensure that these pupils gain a fuller understanding of grammar and punctuation conventions so that they can use them more accurately in their writing.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 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	139078
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10348277
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	458
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	James Battle
CEO of the trust	Sophie Murfin
Principal	Debbie Frater
Website	www.seymourroad.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Wise Owl Trust.
- A large proportion of pupils at this school have lived in other countries before they joined the school. Many pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- A new principal has been appointed since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's 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 his evaluation of the school.
- 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 to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector examined pupils' work in other curriculum subjects.
- 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 met with the CEO, the principal and other senior leaders to discuss pupils' rates of attendance and behaviour.
- The inspector met with senior leaders to discuss pupils' wider development.
- The inspector met with the chair of the local governing body and the board of trustees. He also met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. He scrutinised leaders' records of behaviour.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school development plan and the school's self-evaluation document.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024