

Inspection of Lyme Community Primary School

Lyme Street, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside WA12 9HD

Inspection dates:	26 and 27 November 2024
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?

Lyme Community Primary School is a happy place where everyone is respected for who they are. The school's 'I can!' values of inspire, challenge, achieve and nurture are lived out in all aspects of school life. These values help pupils to feel confident and to make the right choices which support their learning.

Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn. They enjoy the challenges that each day brings. Pupils listen attentively and do their best to live up to the high standards that the school sets for their achievement. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well in a range of subjects.

The school sets high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Teachers establish routines to support children's behaviour in the early years, and these continue throughout the school. As a result, pupils are kind, courteous and well mannered. There is little disruption to learning.

The school has organised a range of experiences for pupils that extend beyond the academic curriculum. These include a variety of additional clubs and visitors who come into school to speak to pupils in assemblies. Pupils eagerly take on leadership roles. School councillors, reading buddies and the safety squad make meaningful contributions to school life. Pupils develop their confidence and leadership skills in these valued roles.

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

The school has made changes to the curriculum during the last academic year, including in reading and physical education. This means there is now a suitably broad and ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of pupils, including those with SEND. In most subjects, pupils' learning is carefully mapped out from the early years to Year 6. Staff are clear on exactly what pupils need to know and the order in which they should learn the subject content. For the most part, teachers design activities that help pupils to learn well. However, occasionally, the activities that some pupils complete do not maximise their learning opportunities, and they do not learn as well as they could.

The school's provisional published data for 2024 shows that the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in reading at the end of Year 6 was below the national average. This was primarily because the changes made to the reading curriculum had not been in place long enough for this group of pupils to benefit fully. Currently, most pupils develop into confident and fluent readers.

The development of pupils' spoken language is a priority. In the early years, staff carefully model the use of subject vocabulary as children play. In later years, pupils rehearse their ideas orally before writing. This helps to develop their thoughts as well as their accuracy in writing.

Due to previously low outcomes in reading, the school ensures that reading is prioritised throughout the school. The library and reading areas in all classrooms are warm and

inviting spaces. Pupils benefit from access to carefully chosen high-quality books that expand their vocabulary and challenge their understanding. Older pupils enjoy the freedom to choose what they are reading next.

Children begin the phonics programme as soon as they enter the Reception Year. All staff deliver the phonics programme consistently well. For the most part, the books pupils read are matched well to their phonics knowledge. However, on occasion, the books that a small number of pupils read do not align as well with the sounds they have learned. This hinders these pupils from becoming confident and fluent readers as quickly as they can.

The school has highly effective processes to identify and support pupils with additional needs at the earliest opportunity. Staff ably adapt the content and delivery of the curriculum to meet these needs. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well and are fully involved in all aspects of school life. The school provides strong pastoral support for pupils and focuses on developing pupils' thinking skills. This helps pupils to develop self-awareness and an understanding of how their decisions can impact others.

The school's emphasis on pupils' wider development is very well developed. It has ensured pupils understand they have a voice and the right to form their own opinions. Through the many aspects of the programmes to promote pupils' personal development, pupils gain a strong sense of respect. They learn about different faiths and cultures and understand that they should not discriminate against others.

The school tracks pupils' attendance rigorously. When attendance falls below the expected level, the school works with families and outside agencies to provide the right support and challenge to bring about improvement. This is successful. Current attendance levels show that more pupils are attending school regularly.

The school considers the workload and well-being of staff in the decisions it makes. Staff appreciate the support that the school gives them to carry out their roles effectively. As a result, staff feel valued.

Governors fulfil their role with commitment. They monitor the school's continuous improvement closely. Governors are clear about their strategic roles and responsibilities. This enables those responsible for governance to hold the school to account fully for the quality of education that pupils receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, the activities given to pupils do not closely match the intended curriculum. This sometimes prevents pupils from deepening their subject knowledge.

The school should ensure that the activities chosen by staff match the intended learning more closely.

- A small number of pupils at the early stages of learning to read are sometimes not provided with books that are closely matched to the sounds they know. This means these pupils do not learn to read fluently and accurately as swiftly as they could. The school should ensure that these pupils practise their reading using books that are well matched to their phonics knowledge.

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	104776
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10347904
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	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Caroline Unsworth
Headteacher	Jo Roberts
Website	www.lyme.st-helens.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2023.
- A new deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2024.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: English, including early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, considered samples of pupils' work and spoke to some pupils about their learning. The lead inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also viewed curriculum documents and samples of pupils' work in other subjects.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour at various times in the school day. This included during lessons as well as at playtime, lunchtime and at before- and after-school provision.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents and carers in their responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. An inspector spoke with parents as they brought their children to school at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Pat Speed, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Shoab Uddin

Ofsted Inspector

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