

Inspection of a good school: Sherdley Primary School

Mill Lane, Sutton, St Helens, Merseyside WA9 4HA

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

Outcome

Sherdley Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this popular and friendly school. They are proud members of the Sherdley family. Pupils feel safe, happy and well cared for. They value the high-quality pastoral support that leaders and staff provide. Leaders make sure that they deal with any incidents of bullying swiftly and effectively. Pupils show highly respectful attitudes towards each other and their teachers.

Leaders have implemented a culture where they expect pupils to try their best and to behave well. Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), respond well to leaders' high expectations. They are polite and well mannered. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers in lessons. They learn increasingly well across a range of subjects.

Pupils strive to make the school the best it can be. They value their leadership roles. Pupils spoke proudly about their work as well-being warriors and as members of the rights respecting team. Older pupils particularly enjoy helping younger children to develop their language and communication skills. Children in the early years settle in well and enjoy learning alongside their classmates.

The vast majority of parents and carers, who shared their views with the inspector, hold the school in high regard. They appreciate all that leaders and staff do to make sure that pupils experience a varied and interesting curriculum.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum for pupils, including those with SEND. They have thought deeply about how to enrich the curriculum by using the local area to support pupils' learning.

Staff have identified the content that they want pupils to learn. They have also considered the order in which pupils will learn this content, from the beginning of the early years to

the end of Year 6. However, in a small number of subjects, the most important concepts that pupils should learn are not emphasised well enough. This hinders pupils' ability to build on their prior learning.

Teachers explain new learning to pupils confidently in most subjects. Teachers make regular checks on pupils' understanding and are quick to deal with pupils' misconceptions. This helps most pupils to learn well across a range of subjects.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Staff work hard to create attractive and exciting reading areas and displays to encourage pupils to read widely and often. Teachers in the early years share a range of stories and books with their classes. Children join in enthusiastically with different songs and rhymes. Older pupils read with both expression and enthusiasm. One pupil summed up the views of many when they said, 'Reading takes you to another world.' Pupils spoke proudly about selecting reading books from the 'Brenda the Vendor' machine.

Children begin to learn phonics as soon as they start school. Leaders make sure that the books that pupils read closely match the sounds that pupils are learning in class. Pupils use their phonics knowledge successfully to read unfamiliar words. Staff deliver most aspects of the early reading curriculum well. They use assessment strategies effectively to quickly spot any pupils who need extra support with learning their sounds. Nevertheless, the strategies that staff use to support struggling readers are not implemented consistently well.

Leaders have high ambition for pupils with SEND. Leaders have considered how to identify and meet pupils' needs so that they can mostly learn alongside their peers. Pupils with complex needs benefit from targeted additional support. They join in with different aspects of school life, including taking on different leadership roles, as well as attending a range of after-school clubs.

Pupils have impeccable manners. They focus well during lessons and work hard, without disruption. However, a small number of pupils do not attend school often enough or do not come to school on time. This impedes their learning across different subjects.

Pupils have a range of different opportunities to develop their understanding of the wider world. They learn about British values, such as democracy and the rule of law. Pupils spoke animatedly about the upcoming visit to the Houses of Parliament.

Pupils learn about different careers and aspirations. They understand why it is important to strive for both short- and long-term goals. Pupils enjoy attending a range of clubs.

Governors share leaders' ambition for pupils. Governors support and challenge leaders to bring about continual improvement. Staff appreciate leaders' efforts to minimise their workload and to consider their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are resolute in their determination to keep pupils safe. Staff benefit from regular safeguarding training to keep their knowledge up to date. Leaders' record-keeping is meticulous. This helps them to swiftly identify if there are any issues or concerns about a pupil's safety. Leaders and staff engage well with families and external agencies so that any pupils who may be in danger of harm get the help that they need quickly.

Pupils have an age-appropriate awareness of different aspects of safety, such as not sharing images online. They find out about the dangers of smoking and drug abuse.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not follow aspects of the agreed strategies when supporting early readers. This hampers some pupils' progress through the phonics programme. Leaders should make sure that staff receive appropriate training to ensure that they implement the early reading programme effectively and successfully.
- In a small number of subjects, subject leaders have not prioritised the most important concepts that pupils need to encounter and revisit across each key stage and year group. This means that some pupils do not effectively build on their prior knowledge when teachers introduce new learning. Leaders should ensure that, in these subjects, teachers emphasise the most important concepts so that pupils make deeper connections with their learning over time.
- A small number of pupils do not attend school as often as they should. Consequently, they miss valuable learning time, which negatively impacts on their progress through the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that these pupils attend school regularly and on time.

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 July 2017.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	104769
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10240932
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	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Kevin Harker
Headteacher	Tony McCoy
Website	www.sherdleyprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders provide a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with leaders, discussed curriculums, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning, and reviewed samples of pupils' work. The inspector also observed pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also considered other subjects on the school's curriculum. She talked to the leaders who lead these subjects. The inspector also spoke to pupils about their learning in these subjects.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, other leaders and staff.

- The inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke with different groups of pupils to gather their views of the school, including discussions about their behaviour and learning. She also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at playtimes.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. She spoke to several parents at the start of the school day. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector met with those responsible for safeguarding at the school. She scrutinised a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding. The inspector also spoke with governors, staff, parents and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector considered a range of documentation provided by school leaders and staff. This included the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, headteacher reports and the leaders' self-evaluation document.

Inspection team

Louise McArdle, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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