

Inspection of a good school: Northway Primary School

Dodds Lane, Maghull, Liverpool, Merseyside L31 9AA

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 2023

Outcome

Northway Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Everybody is welcome at Northway. Pupils thrive in this happy and encouraging school that is at the heart of the community. Pupils and their families appreciate the warm welcome that they receive from staff as they arrive each morning.

Pupils know that they are important and valued. They feel comfortable in approaching staff to talk about any concerns that they may have and are confident that staff will do their best to help them. Pupils get on well together. They are considerate of each other's feelings. Pupils' behaviour across the school is excellent.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and work hard in lessons. They are keen to reach the school's high expectations of their achievement. Right from the start, pupils benefit from a stimulating curriculum which is delivered effectively. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of clubs where they can develop their interests and talents. By taking on special roles such as school councillors, pupils learn how to contribute to the success of their school. Pupils spoke with pride about their planting project with a bee-keeping association to improve the local environment.

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

The curriculum provided at the school is ambitious and well thought out. In all subjects, the important knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember has been ordered carefully, starting from the early years. This ensures that new curriculum content builds securely on pupils' previous learning.

The curriculum is carefully designed to ensure that pupils in mixed-age classes learn all that they should. Ideas and themes across subjects are carefully connected. This helps pupils to make links and to deepen their understanding of important concepts.

Subject leaders have strong expertise. They undertake regular reviews to check that curriculums are being delivered effectively. Teachers are given clear guidance and regular training to further strengthen aspects of their subject-specific knowledge. However, at times, teachers do not use assessment strategies effectively in lessons to check pupils' understanding.

Reading is given high priority in the curriculum. Children start to learn about sounds and letters in daily lessons as soon as they begin in the Reception class. Staff keep a close eye on how well pupils are doing and waste no time in providing extra support for any pupils who fall behind. As a result, almost all pupils become confident and fluent readers before the end of Year 2. However, occasionally, the books that pupils at the early stages of learning phonics are given to practise their reading are too difficult.

High-quality texts including poetry and non-fiction are a feature of the school's 'Treasure Trove' for daily reading. Pupils enjoy listening to their teachers read these texts to them. This helps pupils to develop their own reading preferences. Pupils' confidence in reading contributes to their strong achievement across all subjects.

Staff ensure that pupils' additional needs are identified accurately and quickly. Staff make adaptations to their teaching approaches so that pupils with SEND access the full curriculum and achieve well.

In the Nursery and Reception classes, staff encourage children to settle in quickly. Children concentrate well on activities and play happily with their friends. These firm foundations for learning and behaviour are built on throughout the school. Pupils are polite and respectful. They behave exceptionally well, which means everyone can learn free from distractions.

Pupils learn about the diversity of the wider world. They understand that people have different families, backgrounds, cultures and beliefs and the importance of everyone being treated equally. Pupils know that it is important to keep physically and mentally healthy. They take pride in representing their school in sporting competitions.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They embrace the support and opportunities for development that they receive. Leaders and governors work well together to balance staff workload and well-being. Parents and carers are keen to express their appreciation of the school. The school works well with parents to help them to support their children's education.

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 books that staff choose for pupils to practise their reading do not match their phonics knowledge. This can have a negative effect on pupils' confidence and delay their fluency in reading. The school should ensure that staff are trained to select books for reading practice that match the sounds and letters that pupils know.
- In some subjects, teachers' use of assessment strategies is not effective in checking pupils' understanding. This can lead to a delay in the support that pupils receive to address misconceptions, to correct errors or to move their learning forward. The school should ensure that teachers are equipped to check pupils' learning and to adjust their teaching in response to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils.

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 November 2013.

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	104879
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10283621
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	348
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nina Peters
Headteacher	Kate McKenzie
Website	www.northwayprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. There have also been several changes to governing body membership, including a new chair of governors.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

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 has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher and other leaders. She spoke with subject leaders and other members of staff.
- The inspector spoke with six members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority. She also spoke to the

school improvement partner.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour around the school, at lunchtime and in lessons. She spoke with pupils to discuss their views of the school, their learning, their behaviour and safety.
- 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, art and design and mathematics. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' work. The inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult. She also reviewed several other aspects of the school's curriculum.
- The inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and reviewed samples of documentation relating to SEND.
- The inspector considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View. This included parents' free-text comments. The inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered a range of documents shared by school leaders, including the school improvement plan and the records of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Janette Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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