

Inspection of a good school: Styal Primary School

Altrincham Road, Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 4JE

Inspection date:

9 November 2023

Outcome

Styal Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school because of the positive relationships that they have with staff and other pupils. This creates a friendly atmosphere in the school. Pupils feel cared for by staff. They said that they can share any concerns that they may have with a trusted adult. As a result, they feel, and are, safe at the school.

The school has high expectations of pupils' learning and achievement. Pupils benefit from effective support to ensure that all, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils behave well in school. Children in the early years settle quickly to routines and follow instructions properly. Older pupils act as positive role models in supporting the behaviour of others. For example, at lunchtimes, they organise an outdoor library and play activities for other pupils. They are polite and respectful to one another.

Pupils benefit from a range of trips and visitors that add to the quality of the curriculum. Learning about their rich local heritage instils a sense of pride in them. For example, they gained a strong understanding of the school's history and its special place in the wider community during the celebrations for its 200th anniversary.

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

In most subjects, the curriculum sets out clearly what pupils need to know and remember. This is also true in the early years, where it is clear what children will learn across the early learning goals. This ensures that children achieve well in many areas of learning.

In most subjects, the school has designed curriculums that detail the small steps in learning that will help pupils gain the knowledge that they need. Teachers are clear about what should be taught and when this should happen. Staff provide skilled support by questioning and prompting pupils to deepen their learning. In these subjects, pupils

remember the content of the curriculum well, for example in their detailed knowledge of the history topics that they have studied.

In a small number of subjects, however, the school has not set out clearly enough what pupils need to know. As a result, pupils remember the tasks that they have completed rather than their learning. This also makes it difficult for staff to check and then address any gaps in pupils' learning.

The school has sharpened its identification of pupils with SEND in recent years, starting in the early years. This has ensured that pupils' needs are identified at an early stage. Effective support is in place to enable these pupils to follow the same curriculum as their classmates. The school engages well with other agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are met, for example through specialist sensory programmes.

The school has introduced a new curriculum for phonics that has brought about consistency in the way in which it is taught across the early years and key stage 1. Children in the Reception Year are keen to learn and quickly gain knowledge of letters and the sounds that they represent. The curriculum is clearly set out so that staff can check on how well children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 are keeping up with the phonics programme. Staff use this information well to put comprehensive support in place for pupils who need extra help to catch up. In key stage 1, pupils apply their skills well to read words accurately and with improving fluency.

The school uses many effective strategies to improve the attendance of the small number of pupils who are too often absent. It has analysed the reasons for absence and the detrimental effect that this is having on pupils' learning. Governors have ensured that resources are in place to enable staff to work with parents and carers to address this issue. As a result, the attendance of pupils who are persistently absent is improving.

The school has ensured that there are thoughtful and relevant opportunities for pupils to enrich their learning through a range of activities. It has made good use of visitors to develop pupils' strong awareness of equality. For example, leaders invited a paralympian to motivate all pupils to achieve. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective. They value difference. They understand the importance of differences in faith and culture, for example when celebrating European languages day.

Governors and the school take account of staff's well-being and work-life balance when making changes. For example, they give staff opportunities to work together to design curriculum activities. The school ensures that staff have enough time to carry out their duties well.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school and carry out their statutory duties well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school has not defined well enough what pupils should learn and when this will happen. As a result, staff cannot properly identify or address gaps in pupils' knowledge, and a few pupils do not remember some key learning. The school should ensure that in all subjects the curriculum sets out clearly what pupils must learn and remember.

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 December 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 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	111009
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10289993
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lee Walsh
Headteacher	Louise Boardman
Website	www.styal.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a number of staffing changes at the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- Almost all governors have been appointed to their roles since the previous inspection, including the chair of governors.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

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 received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the leader for SEND during the inspection.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, they discussed 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 also discussed the curriculum in a number of other subjects. They reviewed pupils' work and spoke with pupils about their learning in these subjects.
- Inspectors heard pupils read individually and as part of classroom activities.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to the Ofsted staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school. They discussed behaviour and bullying with pupils and staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff about the provision in place for 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.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Eleanor Overland

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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