

Inspection of a good school: Valewood Primary School

Sherwood Avenue, Crosby, Liverpool, Merseyside L23 7YG

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 May 2023

Outcome

Valewood Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Valewood Primary School love their school and are proud to be members of this learning community. They describe their school as 'inclusive' and 'amazing'. They are encouraged to bring out the best in each other.

Leaders' high aspirations for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are embraced by all. Pupils rise to leaders' expectations. They achieve well.

Pupils, including children in the early years, learn to recognise their emotions and how they impact on their behaviours. As a result, pupils learn self-control. They understand how their behaviour can impact on others. Pupils show empathy and kindness towards each other.

Pupils are confident that staff will listen to any anxieties or concerns they may have. Leaders deal with bullying swiftly and effectively. Consequently, pupils feel safe and happy in school.

Parents appreciate the support they and their children receive. They say that 'nothing is too much trouble' for staff to do to make their children feel valued and included.

Pupils embrace the opportunities that leaders provide to enable them to take an active part in supporting others in school, such as the well-being and attendance committees.

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

Leaders have designed an engaging and ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with SEND. This extends from the early years to Year 6. Leaders have identified the key knowledge that they want pupils to know and the order in which it will be taught.

Leaders have ensured that teachers develop the expertise they need to deliver the curriculum through regular training and support. Teachers explain new learning clearly to pupils. They adapt the curriculum effectively for pupils with SEND so that they can learn alongside their peers. Assessment strategies are used successfully in lessons to identify gaps in learning and to address misconceptions.

In a small number of subjects where leaders are currently refining their curriculum thinking, pupils do not recall prior learning as well as they should. Teachers are not systematically checking what pupils can recall over time. This means that some pupils are not developing a wide body of knowledge as they should.

Leaders have placed reading front and centre of the curriculum. They have adopted a new phonics programme, and all staff have been trained to deliver this effectively. Pupils learn phonics as soon as they start, in Reception. They take home books that match the sounds they are learning. Teachers put strategies in place to support those who are finding reading more difficult than their peers. Nevertheless, some pupils are having difficulty blending sounds and are not reading as fluently as they should. This is hindering their ability to grasp the curriculum in other areas.

In the early years, staff are very skilled in developing pupils' vocabulary and linking activities to children's interests and developmental needs. Throughout the school, leaders have chosen texts carefully to enhance learning across the curriculum and to develop pupils' social and global awareness.

Leaders work effectively and quickly with parents and carers to identify any pupils with SEND. They engage, where appropriate, with external agencies to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. Pupils with SEND are fully included in all aspects of school life.

Pupils behave well in lessons and at playtimes. They show a sensible and mature attitude to their learning and take pride in their work. As a result, little learning time is lost due to misbehaviour.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on developing respect and understanding for all. This is woven throughout all aspects of the curriculum. Pupils are confident to use their voice to raise awareness of injustice. Pupils learn about different world religions and different types of families. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents such as tai chi, choir and athletics.

Governors are aware of what needs to be done to further enhance the quality of education for pupils. They both challenge and support leaders to continue to improve the school. Staff feel proud to be part of this school. They value leaders' consideration of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide effective and up-to-date safeguarding training for staff and governors. All staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. They know how to spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm and how to report their concerns. The safeguarding team works effectively with external agencies to secure the help that pupils and their families need.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about the dangers posed by gangs and how to be safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not check well enough what pupils have learned and remembered over time. Therefore, opportunities to embed prior learning and address some pupils' misconceptions are missed. This hinders pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that assessment strategies are used effectively by teachers in all subjects to check on pupils' learning and to identify and address any gaps in knowledge.
- Leaders have introduced a new phonics programme. A small number of pupils are unable to blend sounds to make words. These pupils are not reading as fluently as they should. Leaders should ensure that sufficient time is given to provide effective support to help these pupils to catch up quickly.

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 on 14 and 15 March 2018.

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	104890
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10283645
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	211
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Samuel Hinde
Headteacher	Helen Tantouri
Website	http://www.valewood.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 and 15 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative education providers for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This is 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 that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspector spoke to the headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.

- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. She spoke with the designated safeguarding leader. She also spoke to staff about their understanding of how to keep pupils safe.
- The inspector spoke to some parents. She also considered the views of parents through Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted’s staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspector spoke to staff to discuss leaders’ support for their workload and well-being.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their experience of school. She observed behaviour at playtimes and during lessons.
- The inspector reviewed documentation, including leaders’ self-evaluation document, attendance records and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- The inspector observed pupils in key stages 1 and 2 read to a trusted adult.

Inspection team

Niamh Howlett, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

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