

Inspection of Broad Oak Community Primary School

Brunswick Street, Parr, St Helens, Merseyside WA9 2JE

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 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?

Pupils are happy at this warm and welcoming school. The 'Broad Oak Family' values, such as friendship and having an 'I can do it' attitude, underpin the way that pupils approach learning. Pupils value the strong relationships that they have with adults at the school.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, live up to these expectations.

Pupils, including those with SEND, immerse themselves in lessons. This is reflected in the work that they produce and how confident they are to talk about what they have learned.

Pupils respect each other. They are polite and well-mannered. From the Nursery onwards, their positive attitudes mean that there are rarely any disruptions to their learning. Pupils trust staff to deal with any incidents of misbehaviour quickly.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of trips and clubs that the school carefully plan to enhance the curriculum and develop pupils' talents and interests. For example, pupils in the early years attend sewing club. Older pupils spoke excitedly about cooking, choir and art clubs as well as football tournaments and visits to the zoo.

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

The school has ensured that there is a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum on offer to all pupils, including those with SEND. From the early years to Year 6, the school has carefully mapped out the key knowledge that pupils should learn in each subject. In most subjects, staff regularly check pupils' learning to identify any gaps they may have in their knowledge. Staff use this information effectively to shape pupils' future learning.

In most subjects, staff are well-equipped to design learning activities that enable pupils to learn the curriculum. Staff benefit from the high-quality training that the school provides. However, in recent years, the school's outcomes for pupils' writing have been too low. The school has therefore made recent changes to the writing curriculum. As a result, staff are becoming more skilled in learning how to support pupils to compose and structure their writing. In addition, some pupils cannot form letters accurately or write legibly by the time they leave Year 2. This then hampers their ability to write fluently and neatly in later years.

The school's published data for 2023 shows that the proportion of pupils who met the phonics screening check in Year 1 was below the national average. The attainment of pupils in mathematics and writing in Year 6, also fell below the national average. In these year groups, a number of pupils with particular barriers to learning joined the school mid-year and had therefore not had time to benefit fully from the school's curriculum. Current pupils mainly achieve well across a range of subjects.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Pupils practise their reading using books that are carefully matched to the sounds that they know. Staff routinely check that pupils are keeping up with the phonics programme. If pupils struggle with reading, skilled staff provide effective support to help them to catch up. The school successfully promotes reading for enjoyment. Staff throughout the school inspire pupils to choose a wide range of books to read.

Many children start school without the typical knowledge and skills for their age. The school swiftly addresses this and children quickly develop their language skills. The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. These pupils achieve well and receive the same broad curriculum offer as their peers. Pupils with SEND take part in all aspects of school life. The school goes to great lengths to support those pupils who are most vulnerable, for example, young carers and new arrivals to the country.

The school prioritises attendance. It does everything possible to reduce pupils' rates of absence. The school's strong pastoral approach helps to make these actions effective. The number of pupils who struggle to attend school regularly is starting to reduce. The schools' caring approach extends to staff well-being too. Staff appreciate that their views and opinions are always listened to and considered.

The school offers a wide range of experiences to support pupils' personal development. Pupils learn to celebrate the differences between people. Pupils are proud to carry out leadership roles such as being subject ambassadors and school councillors. Pupils know how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. They understand what makes a healthy relationship. They also know about different religions and cultures and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governors are fully committed to supporting the continued improvement of the school. They provide challenge and support in equal measure. They carry out their statutory duties effectively and hold the school to account 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)

- The school's newly introduced writing curriculum has not had time to fully embed. This means that some pupils do not write competently and as a result are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education as they could be. The school should ensure that staff are fully trained to enable pupils to compose and structure their writing successfully.

- The school's expectations for pupils' presentation and handwriting across all subjects are not high enough. Some pupils have not mastered legible and accurate letter formation by the time they leave year 2, which hinders their writing fluency, communication and presentation as they move through the key stage 2 curriculum. The school should raise its expectations around children's handwriting skills from the early years upwards.

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	130259
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10348218
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	634
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lisa Moore
Headteacher	Melanie Hignett
Website	www.broad oak.st-helens.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs an on-site breakfast club.
- The school provides early education for two-year-old children.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. They also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, English, science, geography and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about 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 considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a trusted adult.
- 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 during lessons and breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.

Inspection team

Ruth Moran, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Elaine Jackson	Ofsted Inspector
Nicky Parkinson	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Hulse	Ofsted Inspector

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