

Inspection of Firs Primary School

Firs Road, Sale, Cheshire M33 5EL

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 July 2025

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since September 2017. The school received an ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Act in May 2024. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Firs Primary bring their school's motto of 'inspire, believe, achieve' to life. They enjoy every opportunity to learn. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary around the school. From the Nursery Year to Year 6, there is a calm but industrious atmosphere that enables pupils to focus completely on their learning.

Pupils know that staff genuinely care about them and will support them if they have any worries. The pastoral support for pupils is a strength of the school. This helps pupils to feel safe and to be ready for their learning.

The school has high expectations for pupils' academic success and social development. From the early years, children thrive in a nurturing, inclusive setting where their unique personalities are encouraged and celebrated.

Pupils take full advantage of the rich experiences that the school offers them. For example, they enjoy residential trips and benefit from attending a variety of clubs such as guitar, dodgeball and clay creators. Pupils speak excitedly about the sporting competitions in the local area that they take part in. The school is steadfast in making sure that these activities are offered to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

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

Pupils are highly motivated and enjoy learning. Children in the early years get off to a flying start. They learn quickly how to share and take turns. Staff expertly foster children's self-care skills and independence, to enable them to learn successfully through their play.

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum that is broad, balanced and aligns with the national curriculum. However, in a minority of subjects in key stages 1 and 2, the school has not set out clearly the important knowledge and skills that pupils should learn. Staff are not completely clear on what content should be taught. As a result, pupils develop gaps in what they know and remember.

Staff benefit from relevant training and coaching to develop their skills and subject knowledge. In most subjects, this helps them to provide pupils with learning activities and clear explanations that help pupils to build their knowledge.

Pupils are given regular opportunities to recall and retrieve their learning so that it becomes embedded in their memories. Typically, staff are adept at swiftly identifying pupils' misconceptions and misunderstandings. In many subjects, they use the school's checking strategies well to identify where pupils may have gaps in their knowledge and to shape their future learning.

Pupils' enjoyment of reading is extensively encouraged by the school. For example, pupils visit the school's own library, the local library and enjoy daily story time. Older pupils

enjoy reading from a variety of different genres and authors. The books that pupils read have been carefully selected to reflect the diversity in the community.

Staff have had training to help them deliver the phonics programme well. Pupils who struggle with reading, including those who speak English as an additional language, receive targeted support from staff. This helps many of these pupils to develop their reading fluency in readiness for key stage 2. However, a minority of these pupils do not receive regular opportunities to practise their reading skills. Consequently, their progress in learning to read is hampered.

The school identifies pupils' additional needs quickly. It works closely with external agencies, parents and carers to support pupils with SEND, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, to learn well alongside their peers. Staff are skilful in making creative adaptations for pupils with SEND. These pupils, including those in the specially resourced provision, are fully included in all aspects of school life.

Staff support pupils expertly in learning to manage their own behaviour. Playtimes across the school are full of activity, with pupils socialising happily with their peers. The school prioritises maintaining pupils' high rates of attendance. It quickly identifies and helps those families who need support to ensure their children are in school regularly.

The school prepares pupils exceptionally well for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils learn to celebrate the differences between people. They know what characteristics make a healthy relationship. Pupils are proud to carry out leadership roles such as being librarians and school councillors. They have an excellent understanding of the fundamental British values and can relate these to their day to day lives. Pupils know how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy and how to stay safe online.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties well. They share the school's high expectations for pupils. Staff value the support they receive for their well-being and workload. They appreciate the time that the school gives them to do their jobs well. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of subjects, the school has not clearly identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn. This means that, sometimes, teachers are unclear about exactly what pupils should know and remember. This leads to gaps in pupils'

knowledge. In these subjects, the school should make sure that teachers know what pupils should learn so that they can build a secure body of knowledge over time.

- A few pupils do not receive regular opportunities to practise their reading skills. This hinders their progress in learning to read and how well these pupils access the wider curriculum. The school should ensure that pupils receive regular opportunities to practise their reading so that they become confident, fluent readers.

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	106303
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10377925
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	575
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Joanne Bambrick
Headteacher	Sarah Bryan
Website	www.firsprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 May 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school manages an on-site breakfast club.

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). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and with other school staff.

- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, physical education, computing and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum in some other subjects. They spoke with leaders and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 at breaktimes.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments. The inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.

Inspection team

Ruth Moran, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Graham Hamilton	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Morris	Ofsted Inspector

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