

Inspection of a good school: Great Sankey Primary School

Great Sankey Primary School, Liverpool Road, Great Sankey, Warrington, Cheshire, WA5 1SB

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 September 2021

Outcome

Great Sankey Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Great Sankey Primary School. They told the inspector that they would not change anything about the school because teachers make learning fun.

Pupils listen to adults and behave very well. They are kind to each other and trust staff to keep them safe. On the rare occasions when bullying happens, pupils report it, and teachers deal with it immediately. Pupils said that they feel happy and safe at school.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities through the personal development curriculum. They are delighted that they have returned to extra-curricular activities, including sports clubs, gardening and debating. They take their responsibilities as school councillors or reading buddies seriously. Pupils become well-rounded youngsters who achieve well. They support each other and respect those who are different from themselves.

Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This contributes to pupils making good progress through the curriculum. However, in a minority of subjects, teachers have not given pupils enough opportunities to explore ideas as deeply as leaders expect. Teachers make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those who speak English as an additional language, receive the help that they need to achieve well.

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

Leaders, including trustees, have put a great deal of thought into designing a curriculum that fulfils the school's three aims of 'growth, mindfulness and

community'. Through the curriculum, leaders have successfully considered pupils' academic, social and emotional development.

During the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, teachers adapted the curriculum well so that pupils continued to learn. Despite these curriculum adaptations, some pupils still have missing knowledge. Leaders are aware of this and have appropriate plans in place. These include carefully planned and targeted tuition, and sufficient time in lessons to revisit prior learning.

Leaders' ambitious curriculum plans clearly define what pupils should know and remember by the end of each year. In most subjects, including mathematics and English, pupils' progression through the curriculum is strong. However, in a small number of subjects, the activities that teachers choose to deliver the curriculum do not enable pupils to learn in as much depth as leaders intend. This is reflected by the work in some pupils' books. Staff are as ambitious for pupils with SEND, and those who speak English as an additional language as they are for their classmates. They follow the same curriculum as their peers. Staff have high expectations of these pupils and support them well.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Leaders have provided many opportunities for teachers to develop their understanding of how to deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers have thought carefully about the order in which they deliver the curriculum so that pupils can build their knowledge over time.

Teachers foster a love of reading in pupils. Pupils talked enthusiastically to the inspector about their favourite books and authors. They remembered with enthusiasm the events that their teachers had organised for them, including when teachers read stories to them in disguise as 'the mystery reader'.

Leaders have ensured that children begin to read from the start of the Reception Year. There are well-planned phonics sessions every day. Teachers match books carefully to children's reading ability. Staff support children and pupils well, including those with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language. Younger pupils read simple texts accurately. Older pupils continue to develop their ability to read and understand more-complex texts. By the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for the demands of the secondary-school curriculum.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum in the early years is well planned. Teachers skilfully and creatively develop children's knowledge and skills, particularly those related to language and number. Children learn using high-quality resources, including real objects and the natural world. Teachers make sure that children in the Reception Year are well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.

Inside and outside the classroom, pupils across the school take part in a rich variety of activities. These activities enable pupils to develop a deep knowledge of local and world cultures. Teachers care about pupils' well-being. Every day, teachers practise techniques that will help pupils to remain calm and reflective should life become difficult. Pupils value this.

Teachers' and pupils' expectations of behaviour are very high. The positive behaviour of pupils in class, and at social times, ensures that the school is a calm place where learning is not disrupted. Staff know pupils well. They deal with any issues swiftly.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They feel well supported by leaders, governors and trustees, who protect their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors and trustees, ensure that a strong culture of safeguarding permeates every aspect of school life.

Leaders ensure that all staff are fully trained in the procedures for keeping pupils safe. Staff know pupils and their families well. They quickly spot if something is wrong. Staff are available at the start and end of the school day, so that parents and carers can discuss any concerns. Staff work well with outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive the help that they need.

Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe in school. Pupils explained how teachers and external speakers have taught them to keep safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of foundation subjects, teachers do not choose the most appropriate activities to deliver the intended curriculum. This results in pupils not remembering as much of the curriculum as they should. Leaders should ensure that staff are trained to select the most appropriate activities, so that pupils consistently know and remember more of the curriculum across all subjects.
- Teachers have identified that some pupils have missing knowledge. This is as a result of absences due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers and leaders should continue to adapt the curriculum so that pupils catch up with any missed or forgotten learning.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of

the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Great Sankey Primary School, to be good on 29 January 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	144798
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10200762
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	341
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andy Moorcroft
Headteacher	Victoria Briggs
Website	http://greatsankey.warrington.dbprimary.com/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Great Sankey Primary School converted to become an academy school in June 2017. When its predecessor school, Great Sankey Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Challenge Academy Trust.
- The headteacher is also the executive headteacher for the four primary schools in the trust. The deputy headteacher is the head of school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector held discussions with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the deputy safeguarding lead and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector also spoke to the chief executive officer of the trust, members of the local governing body, a representative of the local authority, and the headteacher of a local primary school with a designated SEND resource base.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and modern foreign languages. This involved discussions with subject leaders and

teachers, as well as talking to pupils about their work. The inspector visited lessons in these subjects, and looked at curriculum plans and pupils' work. The inspector heard individual younger pupils reading to their teachers.

- The inspector looked at curriculum plans and examples of pupils' work in other subjects.
- The inspector analysed the school's records of the recruitment checks on staff. The inspector spoke to staff about the school's procedures and systems for safeguarding pupils. The inspector also discussed with staff and pupils how the school teaches pupils to keep themselves safe, including when on the internet.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and at social times.
- The inspector considered the 42 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. This included the 39 free-text responses. The inspector also reviewed the 15 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, so the inspector reviewed the school's own surveys of pupils' views.

Inspection team

Liz Kelly, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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