

Inspection of a good school: Sound and District Primary School

Whitchurch Road, Sound, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 8AE

Inspection date:

2 December 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils try hard to reflect the school's values. They said that these values 'lead us to respect people in school and out'. Pupils enjoy each other's company and play sociably together. They are happy in school.

Pupils trust staff with their worries. If bullying happens, staff deal with it quickly and well. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), spoke enthusiastically about the range of clubs and opportunities available to them. These activities help them to develop their interests and talents.

Pupils readily take on positions of responsibility. They feel fully involved in school life. For example, eco-warriors encourage other pupils to value and respect their school grounds.

Leaders are aspirational for all pupils' behaviour and achievement. Pupils typically behave well in lessons and enjoy their learning. However, in some subjects, they do not learn as well as they could. This is because the curriculums in these subjects are not as well thought out as they should be.

Most parents and carers who shared their views with inspectors were highly supportive of the school. They would readily recommend it to others.

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

Leaders have designed ambitious and well-ordered curriculums in some subjects. They have ensured that staff are trained to deliver these curriculums well. Teachers are clear about what pupils should learn in these subjects. They check if there are any gaps in

pupils' knowledge and fill these gaps quickly. Pupils, including pupils with SEND, build up their knowledge over time and achieve well in these subjects.

In other subjects and in the early years, leaders have not thought carefully enough about what they want pupils to learn and when they should learn it. As a result, some teachers are not clear about what content to deliver and when. Their checks on whether pupils' knowledge is secure are not as effective. This hinders teachers in designing learning that builds on what pupils already know. This is particularly the case where there is more than one year group in a class. Consequently, pupils, including children in the early years, do not build up their knowledge across the curriculum as well as they should.

Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme. They have provided some training to staff to support their delivery of this programme. However, the impact of this training has been limited. Staff do not support some children in the early years, and some older pupils, to become accurate and fluent readers as quickly as they should. The books that teachers ask some children and pupils to read do not consistently match the sounds that they know. This slows pupils' progress in early reading further.

Older pupils develop into enthusiastic readers who enjoy reading for pleasure. They are keen to recommend their favourite authors to others. Pupils also understand how reading deepens their learning in other subjects, such as history. Pupils in Year 6 are well prepared for the reading challenges of the key stage 3 curriculum.

Leaders have ensured that staff are trained well to identify pupils with SEND. Leaders and teachers put effective support in place for these pupils. This helps pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as the other pupils in their class. However, in those subjects where the curriculum is not as well developed, pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders carefully consider pupils' wider development. Pupils enjoy learning about other cultures in subjects such as art and design and music. Leaders make sure that pupils have access to high-quality texts that deepen their knowledge of the diverse lives of people.

Pupils learn leadership skills. They act as school ambassadors, sports captains, playground leaders and safeguarding officers. These roles help pupils to play their part in creating a calm and orderly school environment where learning is not disrupted.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They appreciate that leaders are mindful of their well-being and workload.

Governors provide support and challenge to help leaders and other staff to bring about improvements at the school. However, governors have not kept a close enough eye on the quality of education in subjects other than English and mathematics.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that early reading, geography and history may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff know how to identify when pupils may be at risk of harm. Staff take appropriate action if they have concerns about the safety or well-being of a pupil. Staff are quick to inform safeguarding leaders, who follow up any concerns diligently. Leaders liaise well with other agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families get the timely support that they need.

Pupils learn how to keep safe. For example, they know how to work online safely. Older pupils share this knowledge with younger pupils as part of their digital leader roles. Pupils also learn about potential risks in the community, including the dangers of substance misuse.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The current phonics programme does not support some children and pupils to learn to read well. These pupils struggle to build up the fluency in reading that they need to access the rest of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that their chosen phonics programme supports all children and pupils to learn to read fluently and that staff are trained to deliver this programme well.
- Occasionally, teachers do not give children and pupils at the early stage of reading books that are matched carefully enough to the sounds that they already know. This slows pupils' progress in reading further. Leaders should ensure that teachers select books for pupils that are matched closely to the sounds that they know, so that they become fluent and confident readers.
- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the specific knowledge that pupils must learn and when this should be taught. This prevents some teachers from designing learning to build on what pupils already know. Leaders should ensure that the curriculums in these subjects identify the important knowledge that all pupils should learn from the early years to Year 6.

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 April 2014.

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

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| Unique reference number | 111074 |
| Local authority | Cheshire East |
| Inspection number | 10256159 |
| 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 | 137 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Anthony Shuker |
| Headteacher | Laura Minshall-Thomas |
| Website | www.soundprimary.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 8 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff in the school.
- An inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. They talked with curriculum leaders of these subject areas. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- Inspectors also spoke with leaders from other areas of the curriculum and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- An inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. An inspector also spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload. Inspectors also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They reviewed documentation and spoke to leaders and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes and lunchtime.

Inspection team

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kelly Butler

His Majesty's Inspector

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