

Inspection of a good school: Charlestown Community Primary School

Pilkington Road, Blackley, Manchester, Lancashire M9 7BX

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 January 2023

Outcome

Charlestown Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years, enjoy being part of this caring community. They know that they are well looked after by staff. Pupils feel safe and happy at school.

Pupils know that staff expect them to be respectful, responsible and safe. They meet these expectations by behaving well and treating each other kindly. Any bullying is quickly dealt with by staff so that it does not continue.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to succeed, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils work hard in their lessons. Most achieve well.

Parents and carers are positive about the school. They appreciate the care and support that their children receive. Typically, parents are full of praise for the work that staff do to support their children.

Pupils take part in a range of activities such as sports, film club and musical theatre. They told the inspector how much they enjoyed visiting elderly residents in the local community and spending time with Hugo the 'mentor dog'.

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

Leaders have carefully created a rich, engaging and ambitious curriculum. They are clear about the important knowledge that pupils will learn across a broad range of subjects. Leaders have ensured that this knowledge builds in a thoughtful way from the Nursery Year to Year 6.

Leaders and governors are determined that all pupils and children, including those with SEND, benefit from a high-quality education. Within the last two years, leaders have taken swift and appropriate action to strengthen how well the curriculum is designed and delivered. As a result, current pupils now learn and progress through the curriculum well in most subjects. This is especially the case in reading and mathematics. Recently

published key stage 2 information does not provide an accurate picture of how well current pupils learn the curriculum.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They have thought carefully about how to deliver the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. In lessons, teachers check whether pupils have learned what they need to know. They use this information to adapt their teaching. However, occasionally the strategies that some teachers use to help pupils revisit prior knowledge are less effective. Consequently, from time to time, some pupils struggle to remember some aspects of learning. This makes it harder for them to make links between new knowledge and previous learning.

Leaders and staff are determined that pupils learn to read well. They have made this a priority across the school. Children in the Nursery Year experience a curriculum that gets their communication and language skills off to a strong start. They learn phonics from the very beginning of the Reception Year. Most staff are experts in teaching pupils to read. However, a small number of staff are still honing their expertise to deliver the phonics programme exactly as leaders intend. At times, this hinders some pupils in their learning of new phonics knowledge.

Staff quickly identify pupils, including older pupils in key stage 2, who fall behind in their reading. Leaders ensure that these pupils get the support that they need to help them catch up quickly. As a result, most pupils become increasingly confident readers.

Leaders have developed rigorous systems to identify the needs of pupils or children who may have SEND. Leaders provide appropriately detailed information to staff about these pupils. This helps staff to ensure that pupils with SEND learn well alongside their peers. When needed, leaders and staff work effectively with a range of agencies so that pupils with SEND receive specialist support.

In lessons and at social times, pupils and children behave well. They treat each other, and adults, with respect. Children in the early years listen attentively, follow routines and learn to take turns. Low-level disruption is rare. If it does happen, staff deal with it swiftly so that it does not affect learning. Pupils are motivated by leaders' reward systems. For example, pupils and children are delighted when their parents are invited to join their reward assemblies.

Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities to help pupils develop into well-rounded young citizens. Pupils benefit from trips to the airport, the zoo and adventurous residential visits where they learn to be more independent and work well as part of a team.

Pupils feel involved in school life. They value the responsibilities that leaders provide for them. These include volunteering as librarians and electing their classmates to the school council. Pupils are proud of the work they have done to save energy in the school.

Governors work closely with leaders and staff. Staff feel valued and they are proud to work at the school. They appreciate how senior leaders consider their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders' robust procedures have created a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are vigilant for any changes, for example, in pupils' behaviour that could be a sign of potential harm. Staff report any safeguarding concerns quickly.

Leaders involve external agencies swiftly when needed. They are tenacious in following up any concerns to ensure that pupils and their families get the help that they need.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. They know that staff will take their worries seriously. Pupils learn about how to take care of their physical and mental health, and how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, some teachers do not use effective strategies to help pupils build their knowledge cumulatively over time. As a result, some pupils are not able to recall their prior learning as well as they need to. Leaders should ensure that teachers receive effective support and guidance in order to deliver subject curriculums consistently well.
- A small number of staff do not implement the phonics programme exactly as leaders intend. This slows some pupils' progress in becoming fluent and confident readers. Leaders should ensure that these staff develop the skills and expertise needed to deliver the phonics programme with fidelity.

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 October 2012.

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	105405
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10256164
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	454
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Bridget McKeown
Headteacher	Allison Collis
Website	www.charlestown.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in January 2020. There have been substantial changes to the senior leadership team and the governing body since the previous inspection.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. He met with subject leaders, visited some lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils. The inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also considered other subjects, including computing, science and history. He met with subject leaders and evaluated these curriculums.

- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation. He spoke to the headteacher and senior leaders throughout the inspection. He also met with the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- The inspector held meetings with the staff responsible for safeguarding and scrutinised the single central record. The inspector considered leaders' safeguarding processes and procedures. He observed pupils during social times and discussed safeguarding with them.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Ben Hill, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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