

Inspection of Over Hall Community School

Ludlow Close, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 1LX

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 March 2024

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

The headteacher of this school is Claire Edgeley. This school is a standalone academy, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ian Percival.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils belong to a school that truly sits within the heart of the community. The care, nurture and support that pupils enjoy each and every day radiates beyond the school gates to their families. The regular 'family lunch' is just one example of the strong bond between the school, pupils and their parents and carers.

This school is incredibly successful in overcoming the barriers that may prevent pupils from achieving academically or developing socially and emotionally. Pupils benefit from exceptional provision for their personal development. This ensures that they are ready and eager to learn. It also means that they are well prepared to take their place in modern Britain.

Pupils behave well. The trusting relationships that they hold with staff underpin their desire to follow the school rules. Most pupils show respect to adults and to each other.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are reaping the rewards of the school's increased expectations of their academic achievement. They achieve well across many subjects.

Pupils take on many leadership responsibilities, such as school councillors or reading ambassadors. They keep an eye on those pupils who opt to sit on the buddy bench to make sure that no-one feels lonely or left out. Older pupils generously share their time with children in the early years to support them in their reading development.

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

With the support of a united team, leaders at all levels, including trustees, have successfully improved the school since the previous inspection. Much has been achieved to ensure that pupils benefit from a good-quality education. Considerable change has been managed carefully and sensitively. This means that the unique qualities of the school have not dwindled. It remains a safe, calm oasis that many pupils will remember with fondness for many years. In addition, the school has avoided overloading staff. Their morale is high.

Starting from the early years through to Year 6, the curriculum is ambitious and broad in scope. It ensures that pupils learn all that they should across a range of subjects. The curriculum has been well designed, so that teachers know what to teach in each topic and year group.

Effective subject leadership has ensured that teachers are well equipped to deliver the curriculum. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to design suitable activities that help pupils to learn the content of the curriculum. Teachers check what pupils have learned and ensure that appropriate strategies are in place to help any pupils who have not understood new learning. This is especially true for pupils

with SEND. Their needs are identified early and they are well supported to be successful learners.

In most subjects, pupils remember their current learning well. Even so, in some subjects, especially those that are not taught on a daily basis, some pupils find it difficult to remember aspects of their previous learning. This is because teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to recall what they have learned over time.

The published data does not reflect the strengths of the educational offer at this school. In 2023, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was significantly below the national average. Weaknesses in the previous curriculum, the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and poor attendance rates explain why these pupils were not well prepared for their secondary school. They simply did not have the time to make up for lost ground.

Some older pupils continue to have gaps in their learning, but these are being closed rapidly. Due to the strengthened curriculums, children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 are achieving much better than in the past. They are suitably prepared to move into Year 1 and Year 3. Overall, current pupils, including those with SEND, are achieving well.

The teaching of early reading has improved considerably. Well-trained staff use their expert knowledge to deliver the phonics programme accurately and with fidelity. Pupils at risk of not keeping pace with the programme receive the support that they need to catch up. As a result, by the end of Year 2, pupils have the strategies that they need to read unfamiliar words. However, some pupils do not gain the confidence to move away from breaking up the sounds in words. This limits their fluency and speed when reading. Some older pupils read accurately, but without expression and sometimes a lack of understanding.

Nurturing pupils to become well-rounded youngsters ready to move on to the next phase of their lives runs like a golden thread through every aspect of school life. Pupils blossom in the attention that they receive to become socially and emotionally ready for their future. They have a good understanding of healthy relationships and they have a strong grasp of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are fully aware of the differences between people. They respect others regardless of their physical appearance or their sexual orientation. A carefully designed programme of trips enhances pupils' learning and expands their knowledge of the wider world.

Children are taught how to behave from the moment that they enter the Reception class. Most pupils continue to learn right from wrong as they move through the school. This means that lessons are rarely interrupted. Those pupils who find managing their behaviour more difficult receive highly effective support.

Attendance is a very high priority. Careful analysis of the root causes for pupils missing school has led to absence levels reducing by almost half over the past year.

Trustees have improved their oversight of the school. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths but are equally aware of the priorities for improvement. They offer well-informed challenge to make sure that pupils achieve well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils are not moving beyond using their phonics strategies, so that they are able to read with speed. Others read accurately, but with limited expression. This limits their fluency and understanding when reading. The school should ensure that pupils gain fluency in reading and move past reading the words on the page, so that they understand what is written.
- In some subjects, particularly those that are not taught every day, some pupils do not remember elements of what they have been taught prior to their current topics. This is because they do not have enough opportunities to recall and then consolidate their earlier learning. The school should ensure that pupils' knowledge is secure, so that they are able to deepen their learning over time.

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	140097
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10294374
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ian Percival
Headteacher	Claire Edgeley
Website	www.overhall.cheshire.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 October 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a standalone academy.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school offers a breakfast club and after-school provision.
- A new chair of the trust board has been appointed since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 held meetings with the headteacher, other school leaders, a representative of the local authority and the school improvement partner. They also met with members of the trust board, including the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons and spoke with teachers and with some pupils about their learning. They also looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read with a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered some other subjects by talking to leaders and pupils and reviewing pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to different groups of pupils to gather their views of behaviour, safety and learning. They also visited the playground and dining hall to observe pupils' behaviour outside of the classroom.
- Inspectors spoke to a group of parents and carers as they brought their children to school. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors considered the findings from the online Ofsted survey for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including the self-evaluation document, minutes from trustees' meetings and the school improvement plan.
- 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.

Inspection team

Jo Olsson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sharon May

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024