

Inspection of Larkfield Primary School

Preston New Road, Southport, Merseyside PR9 8PA

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are enthusiastic about their school. They arrive happy and ready to learn. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect between pupils. They attribute this to the way in which staff teach them to manage their own mental health. As a result of this work, pupils are confident to be themselves and are accepting of each other's differences. All of the pupils that inspectors spoke to, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), said that they felt included as part of the school.

Pupils have good relationships with staff and feel safe to talk to them about any concerns or worries that they may have. Pupils are safe from the harmful effects of bullying because staff act swiftly to address any misbehaviour before it escalates. Pupils, including children in the early years, are keen to please and behave well.

Pupils have risen to the higher expectations that leaders have set for their learning. Many of the pupils who responded to the inspection survey said that they felt challenged by the work that teachers set. As a result, pupils find learning interesting and fun, reflecting the school motto of 'enjoy, learn, succeed'.

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

Leaders have introduced a new curriculum in most subjects, although some are at different stages of development. Children in the early years and pupils in key stages 1 and 2 generally experience a well-thought-out curriculum that enables them to build upon their prior learning. Teachers use a range of strategies to assess whether pupils have retained essential subject knowledge. However, some of the tasks that pupils are given to complete do not match the curriculum well enough. Some pupils develop gaps in their learning as a result.

Leaders have placed reading at the heart of the curriculum. They have been effective in developing pupils' love of books. Since the previous inspection, leaders have made sure that staff have access to comprehensive development and training to ensure that they teach early reading effectively. As a result, children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 gain a secure knowledge of phonics. Teachers assess pupils' knowledge accurately to make sure that the books pupils read match the sounds that they are learning. Leaders have put effective support in place to help pupils to keep up with the intended curriculum. However, a small number of pupils in Year 2 and Year 3, who have not benefited from the new approach to teaching reading, continue to have gaps in their knowledge.

Leaders have put in place effective measures to identify the specific needs of pupils with SEND. In the early years, children receive the support that they need to overcome their barriers to learning. For example, there is a strong focus on communication and language in the Reception Year to build the foundations for

children's future learning. Teachers across the school adapt their teaching to ensure that pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as other pupils.

Pupils, and children in the early years, have positive attitudes to learning. They have strong learning habits, such as working well together on tasks. There is no disruption to learning. However, many pupils are persistently absent from school. This means that they miss out on learning all that they should.

There are many projects, clubs and visits that pupils participate in to enrich their personal development. For example, pupils learn life skills through a set of structured activities that they are challenged to do in their own time. There are also meaningful opportunities for pupils to act as responsible citizens through events such as charity fundraisers. Pupils show a strong awareness of the faiths and beliefs of others.

Governors know the school well. They assure themselves about the quality of education by questioning leaders effectively. They set a clear strategic vision alongside leaders to ensure that all staff are on board with the direction of school improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive comprehensive training, including updates to keep abreast of the most recent guidance. This ensures that staff remain vigilant. There are appropriate systems in place to identify pupils who may be at risk and these are known well by all staff.

Leaders are aware of local risks to pupils. Leaders ensure that the curriculum reflects some of these issues, for example when teaching pupils about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Leaders engage well with other agencies to provide early help to pupils and their families where needed.

There is a clearly designed curriculum around internet safety so that pupils understand the risks associated with being online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 have gaps in their reading knowledge. As such, they do not read with confidence and fluency. Leaders should ensure that these pupils receive the support that they need to catch up quickly.

- In a small number of subjects, some of the tasks that teachers ask pupils to complete do not match the intended curriculum well enough. As a result, pupils do not remember the essential information that they need to know. Leaders should ensure that teachers design learning that helps pupils to learn the content of the curriculum.
- Many pupils are absent from school too often. This means that they miss out on their learning. This creates gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that they quickly and decisively tackle the rates of persistent absenteeism so that pupils attend school regularly.

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	104887
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10255972
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	279
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andy Pratt
Headteacher	Julian Ward
Website	www.larkfieldprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 and 4 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, art and design, and design technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also heard pupils read individually and as part of classroom activities.
- Inspectors also spoke to pupils about their learning in other subjects and looked at a sample of pupils' work for these subjects.

- Inspectors took into account the views of those who responded to Ofsted Parent View. They also took account of the results from the pupil survey and for the staff survey.
- Inspectors met with different groups of pupils to ask them about safeguarding. Inspectors reviewed documentation, which included the school's safeguarding policy, register of the checks carried out on new employees and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at breaktimes and when walking round the school. They discussed behaviour and bullying with pupils, senior leaders and other staff.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sheryl Farnworth	Ofsted Inspector
Rebecca Gough	Ofsted Inspector

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