

Inspection of Mersey Vale Primary School

Valley Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, Cheshire SK4 2BZ

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 April 2024

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	Outstanding

The school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Mersey Vale are proud of their school. They treat each other with kindness and respect. Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are happy. They told inspectors that everybody is welcome in this school.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. Pupils, including pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, do their best to live up to these expectations. Typically, pupils achieve well.

Many pupils enter school at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. These pupils receive effective support, which helps them successfully develop their vocabulary and spoken English.

There is very little disruption to lessons or day-to-day school life. Pupils are attentive in lessons, and they work hard. They are confident that staff will swiftly resolve any concerns that they may have. Pupils, including children in the early years, value the strong relationships that they form with supportive staff.

The school provides some well-designed opportunities to enhance pupils' learning of the curriculum. For example, pupils talked excitedly about their choir performances, trips to the airport and orchestra visits. They also take pride in their roles of responsibility, such as being play leaders and school councillors. These experiences add considerable value to pupils' learning and deepen their aspirations.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum, which clearly defines the important knowledge that pupils will learn. Staff typically deliver the curriculum effectively. The school has supported staff well, enabling them to develop suitable subject knowledge.

The curriculum provides regular opportunities for pupils to revisit the concepts that they have learned previously. Staff regularly check on pupils' learning to identify any gaps or misconceptions. Staff ensure that pupils know more and remember more over time. Typically, most pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6.

In most subjects, the school keeps a check on how well the curriculum is delivered. However, in some other subjects, the school does not have a clear oversight of how well the curriculum is helping children in the early years, and pupils in key stages 1 and 2, to learn all that they should. This stops it from identifying when some aspects are not taught as well as intended. At times, this hinders some pupils' progress through the curriculum.

Reading is threaded through the school's curriculum. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors. The school prioritises early reading and phonics. Children in the Nursery class enjoy joining in with songs and rhymes. This prepares them well for learning phonics as soon as they enter the Reception class. Highly trained staff provide pupils with extra support if they need it. This helps these pupils to catch up quickly with their reading. As a result, most pupils become confident, fluent readers by the end of Year 2.

The school has effective procedures in place to ensure that pupils with SEND are identified quickly. Staff skilfully adapt the delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils well. They ensure that pupils with SEND are equipped to learn well alongside their classmates.

Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They are friendly and well-mannered. Where pupils' absence causes concern, the school puts effective strategies in place. Over time, these pupils' rates of attendance improve.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. The school actively celebrates the diverse range of languages and religions that pupils and their families represent. However, pupils' understanding of fundamental British values is not as well developed. In addition, the school offers very few extra-curricular opportunities. As a result, some pupils are less prepared for life in modern Britain than they should be.

Governors are committed to the school. They support and challenge the school for the quality of education that pupils receive effectively.

Staff are proud to be part of the school team. They are overwhelmingly positive about how the school takes their workload into consideration, for example when introducing new initiatives.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school does not have a sufficiently detailed oversight of the impact of the curriculum from the early years to Year 6. This means that the school is not able to identify when aspects of the curriculum are not delivered as well as intended. This sometimes leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school should ensure that it maintains oversight of curriculum delivery to ensure that pupils learn all that they should.
- The school has not ensured that pupils have a deep enough knowledge of fundamental British values. Consequently, some pupils are not as well prepared

for life in modern Britain as they could be. The school should ensure that pupils develop a secure understanding of fundamental British values so that they are ready to be responsible citizens in modern society.

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	106059
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10256008
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	William Goundry
Headteacher	Catherine Whitehead
Website	www.merseyvale.stockport.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 January 2010, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in April 2021.
- The school manages a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. They also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a trusted adult.
- 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Ruth Moran, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lise Houldsworth

Ofsted Inspector

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