

# Inspection of Lower Park School

Hazelbadge Road, Poynton, Stockport, Cheshire SK12 1HE

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 15 years ago and was 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 Lower Park School are friendly, caring and respectful of others. Pupils benefit from the warm and nurturing relationships that staff have with them. Pupils told inspectors that they feel happy and safe in school.

From the early years to Year 6, pupils are attentive in lessons and they work hard. Their positive attitudes mean that there is very little disruption to learning. Pupils trust adults to deal with any incidents of misbehaviour quickly.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Staff ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), succeed in all aspects of school life. For example, by the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well across a range of subjects. Children in the early years are also well prepared for Year 1.

Pupils benefit from the wide range of high-quality enrichment experiences on offer. The school carefully designs and schedules trips, visits and outdoor learning activities to enhance the curriculum. For example, pupils in key stage 2 enjoy their yearly residential trips. These opportunities add considerable value to pupils' learning and development.

Pupils are entrusted with meaningful positions of responsibility, for example as inclusion officers and as eco-councillors. They carry out these roles diligently and they talk with pride about what they have achieved.

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

Typically, pupils at Lower Park School benefit from a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum. Curriculums are ordered logically. In many subjects, and in most areas of the early years, the school has given careful thought to the important knowledge that pupils should learn. This enables most pupils to build securely on what they already know and can do.

Despite the many strengths in the curriculum design, in one or two subjects, the school has not ensured that staff are clear enough about the specific knowledge that pupils should learn and when they should teach it. On occasion, this means that some pupils do not achieve all that they could. Nevertheless, pupils are typically ready for their next stage of learning.

Overall, the school has ensured that staff have been well trained to implement the curriculum. Staff have secure subject knowledge. In key stages 1 and 2, staff use this subject knowledge to design learning activities that enable most pupils to acquire essential knowledge and skills. However, in the early years, occasionally the school does not design learning activities that enable some children to achieve all

that they could. Occasionally, this impacts on some children's development. Nevertheless, most children are ready for key stage 1.

The school has cultivated a love of reading. Pupils, and children in the early years, read widely and often. The school has prioritised reading from the Reception Year to Year 6. Pupils practise their reading using books that closely match the sounds that they have learned. Staff check carefully that pupils can remember previously learned sounds. Adults successfully help those pupils who may be struggling to keep up with the phonics programme. As a result, most pupils are confident and fluent readers by the end of Year 2.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. Staff are skilled at adapting the delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of these pupils while still maintaining ambition for them. They strongly encourage pupils with SEND to be as independent as their peers.

Pupils demonstrate curiosity and perseverance in their learning. They are also proud of their achievements. The majority of pupils attend school every day. If any children are repeatedly absent, the school deploys effective systems to monitor and support them. This has been successful in making sure that more pupils are in school every day.

The school places a high importance on developing pupils' character. Pupils make everyone feel welcome in their school. They learn about fundamental British values and they understand the need to respect people's differences. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. Pupils benefit from the wide range of extra-curricular clubs that are offered to nurture their talents and interests. For example, pupils enjoy tennis, band and drama clubs. Pupils also showed independence in becoming active in their community, for instance by organising fundraising activities to help local charities.

Governors understand their statutory duties and they fulfil their responsibilities well. They challenge and successfully hold the leadership team to account for the quality of education that pupils receive. They also have a firm grasp of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Governors are supportive of staff and leaders.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support that they receive from leaders to manage their workload and to look after their well-being. For example, staff appreciate that one meeting each half term is devoted to their own personal training and development.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In one or two subjects, the curriculum is not as concise and ordered as it could be. This means that, in these subjects, some staff are not as clear as they could be on exactly what knowledge they need to teach to pupils and by when. The school should make sure that it identifies the specific knowledge to be taught and when to teach it.
- Occasionally, the school does not ensure that some learning activities are designed consistently well in the early years. This impacts on the depth of some children's learning and development. The school should think more carefully about how it designs learning to enable children to flourish.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111023
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire East
<b>Inspection number</b>	10226352
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	275
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Clara Kenyon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amelia Lomas
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lowerpark.cheshire.sch.uk">www.lowerpark.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 March 2008, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in November 2021.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- The governing body manages an after-school club.

## 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.

- During the inspection, inspectors met with the acting deputy headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school improvement plan and documentation relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, history and computing. 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 listened to some pupils read to a familiar 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 at breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of parents and carers while pupils were arriving at school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

### **Inspection team**

Ruth Moran, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
John Littler	Ofsted Inspector
Joan Grant	Ofsted Inspector

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