

Inspection of Halebank CofE Primary School

Heathview Road, Halebank, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 8UZ

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this warm and welcoming school. There are strong relationships between pupils and staff, which reflect the school's values. Pupils are kind and polite. They behave well during lessons and at playtimes. They follow school routines consistently.

The school has high expectations of pupils' achievement, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is evident in the school's revised broad and ambitious curriculum. Pupils try their best, and most pupils achieve well.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of trips and clubs that help to develop their individual talents and interests. For example, pupils spoke excitedly about residential trips and local visits to museums, which enrich their learning and raise their aspirations.

Pupils learn how to develop healthy relationships, including when online. They are taught about the differences between people and the importance of respect. However, their understanding of fundamental British values and equality and diversity are less secure. Pupils are proud of their various roles and responsibilities. These include representing their classmates on the school council and acting as ambassadors for each of the school subjects. Older pupils have continued to run a pupil-initiated kindness cupboard, offering donated food and uniform to families.

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

The school has worked effectively to address the issues raised at the last inspection, particularly to secure important improvements to the quality of its curriculum. This has had a positive impact on improving attainment for most pupils. The legacy of a weaker curriculum in the past and the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have had an effect on pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2. This means that some older pupils continue to have gaps in their knowledge. Staff have engaged with training to improve how they implement the curriculum. This has had a positive impact. For example, staff check pupils' understanding routinely and deal with any misconceptions effectively. However, more work is needed to address gaps in older pupils' knowledge.

The school's recently implemented curriculum meets the learning needs of pupils well. The school has identified the knowledge that pupils should acquire in well-ordered steps. Staff have been suitably trained, and they use their strong subject knowledge to make sure that pupils learn the content of the curriculum. In most subjects, pupils progress well through the curriculum and achieve well. However, in a few subjects, the essential knowledge that should be taught has only recently been defined. Staff are not fully clear about the key information that pupils should know and remember.

The school prioritises reading. In the early years, children have opportunities to listen to stories and rhymes that develop their vocabulary. Staff deliver the well-ordered phonics programme effectively. They make sure that children in the early years, and pupils in key stage 1, read from books that include the sounds that they have already learned.

Teachers are swift to spot any pupils who are not keeping up with the programme and help them to catch up quickly. Older pupils develop effective reading habits. They read confidently with both fluency and expression.

The school has worked effectively to better identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND at the earliest possible opportunity. Staff check carefully that appropriate support is in place for these pupils as they move through the school. As a result, pupils with SEND participate in all aspects of school life.

Pupils' conduct contributes towards the school's purposeful learning environment. Children in the early years settle into school life quickly. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work. The school works successfully with families to promote attendance and punctuality. As a result, higher proportions of pupils attend school regularly and on time.

The school supports pupils' wider development and welfare very well. Pupils benefit from the strong support that the school provides for their social and emotional needs. The school has developed a strong pastoral support offer. It provides pupils and their families with first-hand practical support or signposts them to additional help and guidance.

Governors perform their roles well. They have developed a sharp focus on supporting and challenging the school to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. Staff enjoy working at the school. They are proud of the strong culture of teamwork that exists in the school. They are supported to fulfil their roles effectively. For example, the school considers staff's workload when new initiatives are introduced.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some older pupils have gaps in their learning due to a weak curriculum in the past. This makes it difficult for them to build on their learning with ease. The school should ensure that teachers address the remaining gaps in these pupils' knowledge so that they can benefit fully from the new curriculum.
- In a few subjects, the important knowledge that pupils should learn has only recently been identified. This means that, on occasion, teachers find it more difficult to check that pupils have gained a secure understanding of subject content before new learning is introduced. The school should ensure that staff are clear about the knowledge that pupils should be learning and the order in which it should be taught.

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	111244
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10348060
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Haley Roach
Headteacher	Claire Warner
Website	www.halebank.halton.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 October 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school manages its own breakfast club.
- This school is a Church of England primary school in the Diocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection of schools with a religious character took place in May 2017. The next section 48 inspection is expected during the 2024/25 academic year.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 spoke with the headteacher and with other leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with the chair of governors and other members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector also spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. They talked with curriculum leaders of these subject areas. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and spoke with pupils.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school. They also observed pupils at the breakfast club and while they played outside at playtime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also met with parents and carers before school.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil or staff online surveys.

Inspection team

Ian Shackleton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ros Munro

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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