

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Sylvester Primary Academy

St John's Road, Huyton, Liverpool, Merseyside L36 0UX

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 November 2024

Outcome

Sylvester Primary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Ruth Harrison. The school is part of the Wade Deacon Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by chief executive officer (CEO), Gary Kelly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Fowler.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel cared for at this welcoming school. They are happy and safe. Pupils conduct themselves well. They get along well with each other and staff deal with any fallouts appropriately. Pupils particularly enjoy their social times because there is plenty of equipment and activities to engage with. Older pupils play an active part in making sure that playtimes are well organised and fun. For example, sports leaders organise different games each day that younger pupils enjoy.

The school has high ambitions of pupils' learning. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils achieve well across much of the curriculum. Children in the early years make a strong start to their schooling, sometimes from low starting points.

Pupils enjoy the wider opportunities currently available to them. For example, they are enthusiastic about the different residential visits that are organised for most key stage 2 classes. They also take pride in undertaking roles and responsibilities around the school that range from school councillors to librarians.

Pupils access an increasing number of extra-curricular clubs which help to develop their talents and interests. These currently range from dance club to design and technology club. Some pupils also participate in inter-school sports competitions.

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

The school ensures that pupils learn a broad and balanced curriculum. It provides staff with appropriate guidance on how to deliver curriculum content effectively and in a logical order. The school delivers most subject curriculums well. Pupils develop a fair body of knowledge across many curriculum subjects. They are prepared for the next stage of their education. This includes children in the early years.

In some cases, the school carries out effective checks on pupils' learning that quickly identify when pupils might be struggling to understand new concepts. In response to these instances, teachers provide pupils with helpful guidance and feedback. However, the school's checks on pupils' learning are not consistently effective. At times, this means that pupils do not get timely support to address their errors and misconceptions.

The school has effective systems in place to identify pupils' SEND early. It caters for many pupils' additional needs well. For example, it adapts the delivery of some curriculum content so that pupils with SEND can access the same ambitious curriculum as their classmates. However, for some pupils with SEND, the school does not consistently meet their needs as well as it could. Consequently, some of these pupils do not achieve all that they otherwise might.

The school prioritises early reading. Staff deliver the school's chosen phonics programme with fidelity. The school ensures that pupils who struggle with the expectations of the programme are supported to catch up. Most pupils meet the standard of the phonics screening check in Year 1. Pupils gain the knowledge and skills that they need to become confident, fluent readers.

The school caters for pupils' personal development well. It ensures that pupils are equipped to keep themselves safe and maintain healthy relationships. Pupils have a secure knowledge of concepts such as peer pressure and how to respond. They are aware of fundamental British values. They show genuine respect and tolerance for the differences of others. Pupils have a secure knowledge of how to look after their physical and mental health. The school is currently in the process of implementing enhancements to its broader development opportunities. Nonetheless, it already provides some wider opportunities, such as trips and visiting speakers.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They engage well in their lessons. The school deals with occasional low-level disruption effectively. The school has high expectations of pupils' attendance. It fosters positive relationships with families and does all that it reasonably can to help remove the barriers preventing pupils from attending school. This means that most pupils attend school regularly.

Those responsible for governance fulfil their statutory duties. They provide appropriate levels of challenge. The school has taken effective actions to maintain the quality of education found during the last inspection. For example, the school has introduced clearer curriculum guidance for staff along with accompanying learning activities and resources

that are well designed. These actions have improved the overall quality and consistency of curriculum delivery.

Staff feel supported by leaders. Some say that they feel lucky to work at the school because leaders are responsive to their workload and well-being needs. For example, leaders reviewed the school's assessment policy to ensure associated tasks were more manageable for staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's checks on pupils' learning are not consistently effective. Consequently, there are times when the school does not use assessment information well to provide swift guidance and support to pupils so that they can address their errors and misconceptions. The school should review its assessment strategies to ensure that pupils who might be struggling are quickly identified and given timely help with their learning.
- The school does not meet the additional needs of some pupils with SEND as well as it could. At times, this means that some of these pupils do not achieve the best possible outcomes. The school should ensure that staff have the information and expertise needed to cater for pupils' individual needs so that these pupils can access their learning consistently well.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding,

behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, The Sylvester Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2013.

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 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	143878
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10348359
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	279
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Fowler
CEO of the trust	Gary Kelly
Principal	Ruth Harrison
Website	www.sylvesterprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school operates before- and after-school clubs that are overseen by those responsible for governance.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into consideration in his evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.

- The inspector met with the principal, the SEND coordinator, some subject leaders and other staff during the inspection. The inspector talked to staff about their workload and well-being.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the board of trustees and others who are also responsible for governance. He also spoke with the CEO.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also considered documents and spoke to some staff about the curriculum, the early years, SEND, attendance, safeguarding, personal development and behaviour.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online staff survey and the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector spoke to pupils about their experiences of school. There were no responses to the online pupil survey.

Inspection team

David Spruce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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