

# Inspection of a good school: Penketh South Community Primary School

Finlay Avenue, Penketh, Warrington, Cheshire WA5 2PN

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Inspection dates:

28 and 29 September 2022

## **Outcome**

Penketh South Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. This is because leaders and staff are ambitious for pupils and they help them to do their best. Leaders provide pupils, including children in early years, with a worthwhile curriculum. This helps pupils to thrive at this school. Pupils said that they enjoy a range of subjects, not because the learning is easy, but because staff help them to think deeply about their work.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils, including children in the Nursery and Reception classes, are happy and settled, and feel safe. Pupils behave sensibly in lessons and when moving around the building. They are polite and show much self-control. Pupils agree with leaders that learning how to respect one another is an important and successful part of life at Penketh South. Pupils said that leaders and staff, including the school's 'safe and sound team', resolve any concerns about bullying swiftly and effectively.

Pupils, including those with SEND, value the extra learning opportunities that staff provide for them, including the popular school choir. Pupils gain many new skills from lessons in the school's woodland area. For instance, some pupils recently made a bird house and learned how to use a saw. They hope that maybe the robins, house sparrows or goldfinches that they have learned to identify will come and nest in the boxes that they have made.

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

In developing the school's curriculum, leaders have carefully considered up-to-date research about how pupils learn. Leaders have worked successfully to revise and strengthen much of the school's curriculum. In the main, the overarching curriculum is well designed. Leaders have also appropriately adapted the curriculum to address pupils' gaps in knowledge that are due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is helping pupils to catch up with any missed learning.

Leaders challenge themselves and the staff about how best to develop pupils' knowledge of different subjects. Many staff make effective use of the curriculum advice provided by the multi-academy trust, as well as from outside experts. Leaders have ensured that most of the curriculum content is well considered and that it successfully leads to pupils achieving well. Even so, in a few subjects in the wider curriculum, leaders have not identified all the important knowledge that staff need to teach. This hinders how well a few pupils learn.

Children in early years, including two-year-olds, have a positive start to their education at the school. Their curriculum is well thought out and implemented well. Staff skilfully focus on developing children's communication skills. They model language carefully to children in the Nursery and Reception classes. Staff successfully extend how well children think, play and explore through their everyday learning.

Leaders ensure that staff use assessment strategies appropriately to check how well pupils are learning the curriculum. Teachers use this information to shape the next steps in pupils' learning.

Staff, such as those in the Nursery and Reception classes, quickly spot when children may have SEND. Teachers successfully adapt the delivery of the curriculum so that pupils and children with SEND achieve well. Leaders make certain that pupils with SEND study the same curriculum as their peers, as well as being fully included in wider school life.

In each classroom, starting in Nursery, leaders and staff place great emphasis on developing children's and pupils' love of reading. Children in Nursery are exposed to poems, rhymes and a rich array of fiction and non-fiction books. Staff in the Reception class skilfully build on this work, including by carefully introducing phonics. While lots of pupils in key stage 1 learn to read well, a small number of pupils struggle to practise their reading. This is because, on occasions, some staff choose reading books that are not fully matched to the sounds that pupils know. Older pupils in the school read widely and often. They read a diverse and challenging range of texts. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read confidently and fluently.

Leaders and staff have established a calm, purposeful atmosphere in the school, beginning in Nursery. The learning environment, especially in the Nursery and Reception classes, is designed to engage children and pupils in their learning. Children and pupils, including two-year-olds, are rarely disturbed by any low-level disruption to learning.

Older pupils understand that university can be a valuable way to continue their education. This is because leaders help pupils to aim high for their future. Leaders and staff help pupils to become ready for life in a diverse world. Pupils act responsibly, such as by engaging in litter-picking and recycling plastic. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about Britain's rich cultural heritage, such as at the theatre and through orchestral performances.

Leaders, governors and the trust understand the strengths of the school. They challenge leaders effectively to ensure further improvement to the quality of education. Parents and

carers and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school. Leaders ensure that staff have a reasonable workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. They ensure that staff are well trained to support pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders also provide support and guidance to help pupils' families.

Staff fully understand their responsibilities. They are vigilant and carefully record any concerns that they may have about pupils' welfare. Leaders review this information carefully and act promptly to safeguard pupils and their families.

Pupils said that they feel safe at school and that the pastoral team acts immediately on all concerns. Leaders make effective use of experts from outside the multi-academy trust to audit the effectiveness of leaders' safeguarding arrangements.

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

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

- Some reading books are less-well matched to the sounds that pupils know. This causes some pupils to struggle more than necessary with their reading. Leaders should make certain that the reading books selected by staff fully match pupils' phonic knowledge.
- In a few foundation subjects in the wider curriculum, leaders have not identified some of the important knowledge that pupils must learn. While pupils enjoy their learning, they do not know some of the key subject information that they need to remember. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum content is more clearly identified in these remaining subjects.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Penketh South Community Primary School, to be good in May 2017.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145710
<b>Local authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241424
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	245
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Howard Platt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Grace
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://penkethsouthcp.co.uk">http://penkethsouthcp.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Penketh South Community Primary School is part of The Challenge Academy Trust.
- The school converted to become an academy school in April 2018. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- Some staff and governors are new since the previous school was inspected.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- Kool Kids Out of School, a separately registered club operating from the school site, was not part of the school inspection.
- Some children in the Nursery class start at the school aged two years.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector completed deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. He met with subject leaders, visited learning activities, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with

staff and pupils. As part of this work, the inspector spent some time in the Nursery class, including observing staff's work with two-year-olds.

- The inspector also considered information about some other subjects of the school's curriculum.
- The inspector met with leaders about early years, SEND, behaviour and the provision for pupils' personal development.
- The inspector met with six members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also met with representatives of the multi-academy trust, including the chief executive officer.
- The inspector spoke with several groups of pupils, as well as with some parents and staff. The inspector reviewed responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View. He considered responses from pupils and staff to Ofsted's online surveys.
- The inspector checked on leaders' safeguarding arrangements, including the recruitment checks made on staff. The inspector reviewed examples of leaders' records of their actions on safeguarding issues. The inspector spoke with leaders, staff, parents, pupils and governors to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding in school.

### **Inspection team**

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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