

Inspection of a good school: Pace

Derbyshire Hill Road, St Helens, Merseyside WA9 2LH

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 March 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

For many pupils who attend Pace, this is their first positive experience of education. Pupils enjoy attending the school because they know that staff care deeply about their well-being. Pupils try hard to meet the school's expectations for them. They know that staff value them as individuals. The school prioritises building positive relationships with pupils. This supports pupils to be ready for their next steps in education, employment or training and helps them to feel safe.

Pupils benefit from a strong start to the school. The school works closely with pupils' mainstream schools to learn about their experiences so far. Staff have clear and consistent expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct. Pupils who have been at the school for longer, learn to take responsibility for their actions and the impact that they could have on others.

Some aspects of the curriculum do not enable pupils to learn as well as they could. This slows pupils' achievement.

Most parents and carers speak highly about the support that their child receives at Pace. They said that the school gives their child a lifeline when they are struggling.

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

The school wants the best for pupils. There is a well-considered induction process that captures pupils' achievements, difficulties and previous experiences of education. Many pupils arrive with long periods of absence or disruption to their education. Staff plan a suitable package of support for each pupil as they transition into the school. Consequently, most pupils respond well to the school environment and curriculum.

Pupils learn a broad range of subjects. Teachers provide clear explanations and break learning down into small steps. This helps pupils to engage and be interested in learning. However, the curriculum in some subjects does not enable pupils to build knowledge well.

The school has not identified the most important knowledge that it wants pupils to learn in these subjects. As a result, some pupils do not build their knowledge well enough. They find it hard to remember their learning over time.

Although in some subjects, such as reading, the school checks pupils' understanding well, this is under-developed in other subjects. This is because assessment systems do not give staff the most useful information about pupils' learning. This makes it difficult for staff to adapt their teaching to help pupils learn missed or forgotten knowledge.

The school provides ongoing training to staff that enables them to promptly identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In addition, staff receive specific training in some of the common challenges that pupils at the school may face. This helps staff to capture pupils' interests and understand how to support them effectively.

Reading is high profile. Staff identify any gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge and help them to learn the sounds that letters make. Pupils read books that contain the sounds that they know. This helps them to develop their reading confidence and fluency. Staff model sounds with accuracy. They recognise where pupils need extra support and provide effective help quickly.

Pupils learn that it is important to respect others regardless of their background. They access a range of trips to support their learning across the curriculum. Pupil voice is valued by leaders and plays a part in shaping the school's further development. However, the school does not provide sufficient personal development opportunities to enhance pupils' talents and interests.

Staff feel well supported by the school. The training that staff receive helps them to have a consistent approach to supporting pupils' social and emotional needs.

The management committee is dedicated to the improvement of the school. It makes regular checks on the systems and procedures in place to keep pupils safe. However, the assurances that the management committee seeks about the quality of education do not provide it with enough information about the effectiveness of the curriculum.

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 has not identified the most important knowledge that it wants pupils to learn in several subjects. As a result, some pupils do not build their knowledge well enough. The school needs to ensure that the important knowledge that pupils should learn is clearly identified and ordered to support pupils to know and remember more over time.

- The school's assessment systems do not give staff the most useful information about what pupils know and remember. This makes it difficult for staff to adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs as well as they should. The school should refine assessment opportunities so that staff check pupils' progress through the curriculum effectively.
- The school does not offer sufficient opportunities to enhance pupils' personal development. Consequently, some pupils do not develop their individual talents and interests as well as they should. The school should review its provision for personal development to make sure that it promotes pupils' talents and interests well.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2014.

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	104757
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10294199
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Jimmy McNamee
Headteacher	Giora Berman
Website	paceandlaunchpad.sthelens.gov.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The headteacher is the interim headteacher of the alternative provision service.
- The school caters for pupils with a range of SEND including social, emotional and mental health needs and pupils who have been or are at risk of permanent exclusion. Most pupils are dual registered with a mainstream school. They attend this school part time for up to two terms. Some pupils attend the school for a longer period of time.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading; mathematics; and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors met

with subject leaders, visited some lessons, talked with pupils and staff and looked at examples of pupils' work. Inspectors scrutinised leaders' curriculum documentation and pupils' work in some other subjects.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders to discuss pupils' rates of attendance and pupils' behaviour.
- The lead inspector met with members of the management committee, including the chair. She also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes, in lessons and at the start of the day. They scrutinised leaders' records of behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan and the school's self-evaluation document.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders 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 spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Jane Dennis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jane Holmes

Ofsted Inspector

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