

Inspection of Smithdown Primary School

Chatsworth Drive, Liverpool, Merseyside L7 6LJ

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and their parents and carers, are proud to be part of this exceptional school. Pupils come from a diverse range of backgrounds. They embrace each other's differences. Staff help all pupils to flourish and grow into polite, articulate and well-rounded individuals.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve extremely well. Staff have exceptionally high expectations of pupils. Pupils feel empowered to tackle new challenges with great confidence.

Pupils love every part of their learning. Pupils talked to inspectors with great pride about their achievements. They know that they are always learning, whether in the classroom, in outdoor spaces or at social times. For example, pupils relish exploring the exciting outdoor play and 'edible garden' areas with their friends at break times. Leaders inspire pupils to broaden their vocabulary and knowledge of the wider world through their excellent choice of resources and displays. Pupils talked animatedly about how they care for the school's guinea pigs, Marmalade and Nibbles.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is exemplary. Pupils feel safe. They trust adults to sort out any problems that they have. Bullying is rare. Pupils know that adults will deal with any incidents sensitively but thoroughly.

What does the school do well?

Leaders at Smithdown Primary School provide extensive support to parents, pupils and staff alike. With the support of a highly skilled governing body, leaders have created a harmonious community where everyone maintains the highest standards of learning and behaviour every day. Pupils benefit from the carefully crafted curriculum that leaders have developed. Pupils achieve remarkably well, regardless of any challenges that they might face. Governors rigorously check that vulnerable pupils get the support that they need. All pupils, including those in the early years and those with SEND, develop an impressive range of knowledge as they progress through the school curriculum.

Pupils often join the school after moving from other areas. Many come from other countries where English is not the main language spoken. Leaders ensure that supporting pupils to become accurate and fluent readers is a priority across the school. All staff are adept at helping pupils to build up their reading knowledge, regardless of pupils' ages or their previous experience of school. Children begin to learn how to use phonics knowledge to work out what words mean as soon as they are in the Reception Year. Teachers make sure that the books that pupils read support them to increase their reading knowledge rapidly. By the time pupils are in key stage 2, they love to read a wide range of books to themselves, or to other pupils. Leaders' strong and effective focus on reading enables pupils to access other areas of the curriculum.

Teachers help pupils to excel in their learning. They expertly find out what each pupil already knows. They make highly effective use of leaders' detailed curriculum plans by ensuring that pupils build on what they have learned before. Pupils recall past learning easily. Teachers' expertise in choosing well-thought-out activities helps pupils to learn new things quickly.

Leaders ensure that pupils get any additional support that they need. For example, in the early years, teachers provide specific support for children who have been particularly disadvantaged during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Staff also work very closely with parents to help them support their children's learning at home. The impact of this is already clear. Children in the early years are eager to join in learning activities. This is despite many having significant gaps in their language development. They flourish because of the excellent early years curriculum.

Similarly, leaders ensure that pupils with SEND, or those who have additional need due to experiencing trauma, benefit from high-quality support. Staff are skilled in identifying the needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils and their parents value the support that staff provide. Pupils across the school are helped to overcome any barriers that they face. They are justifiably proud of their achievements.

In every part of the school, including in the early years, there is a buzz of pupils enjoying their learning. Pupils take pride in every piece of work they complete. They work well independently or with others. They remain focused right up to the last minute of every lesson. Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. They follow the school rule of showing kindness and respect to others without being reminded.

Pupils' learning is enriched by the wide range of high-calibre experiences that leaders offer. All pupils are encouraged and supported to try new things. Opportunities to attend clubs and activities are eagerly snapped up by pupils. Leaders provide unique and enticing opportunities, such as being a trainee fire officer or being a science or geography 'guru'. Pupils celebrate the rich diversity of the different faiths and cultures of their school community. They relish times of reflection in assembly or in mindfulness activities. These activities help pupils, especially the most disadvantaged, to build up confidence in readiness for their next stage of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors have a deep understanding of the potential safeguarding risks that pupils in the school might face. Leaders carefully weave activities into the curriculum to develop pupils' awareness of, and resilience to, the potential dangers around them. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They appreciate the need to follow rules for everyone's safety.

All staff are vigilant and ensure pupils are kept safe. Leaders keep a close eye on the most vulnerable pupils. They are well trained to identify, help and manage safeguarding risks for all pupils.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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

Unique reference number	131597
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10200821
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	446
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Norman Christian
Headteacher	Philip Horne
Website	www.smithdownprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The number of pupils on the school's roll has significantly increased over recent years.
- A large proportion of pupils have lived in other countries before they began at the school. Many pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The impact of the pandemic was discussed with the headteacher. This was taken into account by inspectors in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school, including the two special educational needs coordinators. Inspectors spoke with a group of

governors, including the chair governors. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation for safeguarding, including the school's central record of staff and visitors; staff training records; records of safeguarding; and samples of the records kept on individual pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history, music and physical education. They talked with the curriculum leaders of these subject areas. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. Inspectors discussed curriculum plans and pupils' work in other curriculum areas, such as art and design, science and design and technology.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break times and lunchtimes. They watched pupils as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences of school.
- Inspectors looked at the 33 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 34 free-text responses from parents to find out their views of the school. Inspectors considered the 27 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. They also spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Christine Howard

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Peach

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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