

# Inspection of Didsbury CofE Primary School

Elm Grove, Didsbury, Manchester M20 6RL

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Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

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

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy school, behave themselves and mostly achieve well. In some subjects they achieve highly. Pupils said that they learn 'fun details about facts'. Nevertheless, sometimes in the early years, children learn less successfully. Pupils learn to understand values such as self-belief and determination. They know that staff expect them to try hard and to do their best.

Pupils form meaningful friendships. A typical pupil comment was 'On my first day at school, I made a really nice friend and we're still friends years later.' They enjoy supportive relationships with staff. This helps pupils to feel happy. Pupils' thoughtful behaviour and kind words reflect the high expectations that leaders and staff have of them. Pupils feel safe because leaders listen to them and deal effectively with any issues of bullying.

Pupils with SEND, as well as many other pupils, profit from a wide range of extra activities. The art club is especially popular and pupils said that the art activities help them to express their feelings and learn how to compliment other people's work. Pupils are very proud of how they support one another and help the school. For example, inspectors met with pupils who act as members of the school council, librarians, sports ambassadors, house captains and ethos ambassadors.

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

Leaders' curriculum is broad and mostly ambitious for pupils. Leaders' successful work with parents, pupils and staff throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that pupils achieve highly as readers and mathematicians. Pupils also achieve well in other curriculum subjects. Despite some variability in leaders' thinking about the curriculum in early years, pupils leave Didsbury CofE Primary School ready for their continued learning at secondary school.

Leaders have spent valuable time working with staff to refine their thinking about the curriculum. Mostly, subject curriculums are well considered and teaching helps pupils to successfully learn the rich foundational knowledge that they need. However, in some subjects, particularly in the early years, leaders' curriculums are less well thought out. This means that some teachers do not focus sharply enough on the knowledge that pupils should know and remember. This hinders some pupils' learning.

Most of the time, teachers select activities carefully to suit the curriculum. Pupils complete work that is demanding and builds on what teachers have covered before. However, on occasion, some teachers organise learning activities that are not well matched to leaders' curriculums. This risks teachers not teaching all the curriculum, nor in the order needed. These issues are more pronounced in the early years. That

said, leaders are well on their way with this work in early years, pursuing clear plans to address these weaknesses.

Teachers use assessment strategies effectively to identify any knowledge that pupils have not fully understood. Leaders ensure that such assessment information is used by staff to adapt their teaching. In early years, leaders have successfully reduced the workload of staff by halting any unnecessary recording of children's learning.

Pupils achieve highly in phonics, reading, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Even so, leaders are ambitious to further enrich pupils' learning to read. Trustees and governors have substantially invested in successfully establishing and resourcing a new phonics programme that staff use for teaching. Reading books match the sounds that pupils know. Leaders prioritise pupils with weaker reading skills for extra help, so that they catch up quickly. Staff teach phonics skilfully and in line with the school's phonics programme. Nevertheless, some small inconsistencies remain in how well staff listen to pupils read from their new reading books. Leaders have already organised additional training and support to further refine staff's teaching of reading and to ensure a wholly consistent approach.

Leaders weave consideration of the needs of pupils with SEND throughout their work. Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified and prioritised quickly and accurately by teachers. Recently, leaders including those from the academy trust, have taken effective action to make sure that pupils with SEND are taught by teaching staff alongside their classmates. This ensures that these pupils do not miss out on the ambition that others are expected to achieve.

Leaders make sure that staff provide pupils with help to manage their emotions, so they continue to have a rewarding and settled experience at school. Pupils' positive behaviour means that lessons are rarely disrupted. Staff can focus on teaching the curriculum.

Leaders carefully identify the knowledge that pupils need to know as part of their personal, social and health education. Leaders also provide pupils with a beneficial set of experiences that help them to understand the wider world. Staff help pupils to understand important events; for instance, to understand the reasons why British forces recently helped to evacuate 15,000 British nationals, Afghan staff and others from Kabul airport in Afghanistan. Pupils develop a mature attitude towards their own responsibilities for helping other people. As one pupil told inspectors 'As a job, I want to be like David Attenborough because I don't like the fact that the planet is struggling.'

Governors and trustees challenge and support leaders well. Leaders manage change carefully. They ensure that staff have access to worthwhile training and development. Leaders are considerate of staff's well-being and their workload.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders' thorough systems and arrangements ensure that pupils are safeguarded. Leaders and staff spot pupils who need early help or are at risk of harm. They record information carefully about any concerns to help to build an understanding of pupils' needs. Leaders act to protect pupils where necessary, including by working with other agencies and parents.

The academy trust and governing body make sure that leaders keep a close check on the quality of safeguarding. Leaders at the school are well trained and up to date in their knowledge of safeguarding, including about important issues, such as domestic abuse. They ensure that staff have secure safeguarding knowledge.

Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils told inspectors that they know that they can tell staff their worries.

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

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

- In a minority of subjects, teachers' delivery of some of the curriculum does not match the content that leaders have identified to be taught. This is a whole-school issue but requires the greatest attention from leaders in the early years. This weakness risks causing gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders should make certain that what happens in classrooms matches the curriculum.
- Leaders do not identify all the essential knowledge that pupils, particularly children in the early years, need to build up more complex knowledge. This means that pupils do not learn some subject curriculums as well as they should. Leaders should consider more carefully the knowledge that teachers will teach throughout the school.

## 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>	142265
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	10242306
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	242
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Paul Good
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Paul Good
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helena Miller (executive headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.didsbury-pri.manchester.sch.uk">www.didsbury-pri.manchester.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Didsbury CofE Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2015. When its predecessor school, Didsbury CofE Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall. The predecessor school was founded in 1612.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Manchester. The most recent section 48 inspection was conducted in January 2019.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club on site: Didsbury CE Kids Club.
- The school is led by an executive headteacher who also works at another school in the academy trust.
- The executive headteacher and the chief executive officer of the academy trust were new to their roles in September 2022. Several other school leaders are also new to their roles.
- Leaders use one registered alternative provision for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design, history and physical education. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, including in the early years, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed information about some other curriculum subjects and considered a range of information about pupils' personal, social and health education.
- Inspectors listened to some pupils read to staff.
- Inspectors met with some parents, considered correspondence from parents sent to Ofsted and reviewed responses to Ofsted Parent View including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors met with the local authority and spoke by telephone with a representative of the Diocese of Manchester about the work of the school.
- The lead inspector spoke with the chair of the academy trust, who also holds the role of chair of governors. The lead inspector also spoke with some other governors.
- Inspectors met regularly with the chief executive officer of the academy trust and with the executive headteacher.
- Throughout the inspection, inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils, including pupils with SEND, to hear their views of their education as well as about behaviour and safety. Inspectors also reviewed pupils' responses to a survey by Ofsted.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of staff and considered responses from staff to an Ofsted survey.

Inspectors evaluated safeguarding by speaking with leaders, staff, pupils and parents. They reviewed information held by Ofsted as well as reviewing a sample of leaders' records. Inspectors reviewed the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.

## Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Collette Mather	Ofsted Inspector
Shameem Patel	Ofsted Inspector





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