

Garswood Primary School

Hamilton Road, Garswood, Wigan, Lancashire WN4 0SF

Inspection dates

27–28 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher is inspirational and has an unwavering drive and ambition to secure the very best outcomes for all pupils.
- Governors, with senior leaders, relentlessly drive the school forward with a deep commitment and desire for continual improvement through high levels of challenge. They do this because they want the best for pupils.
- Leaders are skilled in analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They produce clearly focused plans which enable them to address areas of weakness successfully with a sense of urgency.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers have strong subject knowledge which is highly effective in engaging pupils' interest. Subject content is creative and promotes high levels of pupil enjoyment.
- Teachers know the children well and are adept at targeting the specific needs of each child. This ensures high achievement for all pupils.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. Funding is used exceptionally well to ensure that the best provision and outcomes are secured.
- Learning environments are of a very high standard. The quality of work displayed across the curriculum is impressive.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy and engage in a varied range of clubs and visits provided by the school. This provision enhances the excellent development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable and reflects the strong caring ethos generated by all school staff. Pupils are eager to take on varied roles of responsibility within the school and they do this with great maturity and success.
- The curriculum inspires pupils. First-hand experiences and external visits bring subject areas to life for pupils. Subject leaders now need to sharpen further their focus on the development of pupils' subject-specific knowledge and skills in subjects other than mathematics, science and English.
- Overall attendance is above that of other schools nationally and improving further. Leaders' continued efforts to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils are already a priority for improvement, but there is still more to do to ensure that this group of pupils attends school as well as other groups.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen further the actions of leaders of subjects such as geography and history to ensure that they have an even greater impact on teaching, learning and pupils' outcomes.
- Improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils so that it is as high as that of other pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher is uncompromising and determined in her ambition for the best possible outcomes for the pupils and staff at Garswood. This rigorous drive has ensured an exemplary culture and ethos which are motivating and challenging. Leaders and staff are a dedicated team focused on the pursuit of excellence in all that they do.
- Leaders know the school and the pupils extremely well. They are clear about the school's strengths and areas for further development. School development planning is based on precise evaluation and robust monitoring. For this reason, leaders have successfully addressed areas identified as needing to improve at the last inspection. For example, the outdoor learning environment in the early years is now a strength. This is used very effectively and creatively to develop curriculum experiences for children when learning outdoors.
- Performance management is highly effective and ensures that staff are held to account for the progress of pupils. Staff are deeply involved in their own professional development. They benefit from a full programme of support for early, middle and senior leadership development. This creates a pool of highly skilled staff where teachers and leaders are motivated and empowered to learn from one another. Consequently, staff are highly reflective and are committed to improving their practice.
- The curriculum is balanced and inspiring. The school creates very memorable learning opportunities for pupils linked to opportunities for first-hand experience, for example visits to the seaside, working with artists and themed weeks across the school year.
- The pupil premium grant for improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils is used extremely effectively. Funding is focused appropriately to support the academic and social development of disadvantaged pupils. Pupils are supported well in a range of activities, for example enriching reading experiences. Staff also work closely with the whole family. The early years pupil premium is used to support speech and language intervention programmes to develop the skills of particular children.
- Physical education (PE) and sport funding is used to increase participation in activities for pupils across the school. This funding provides opportunities for an Olympic visit programme set to inspire future young athletes. PE and sport funding is also used to employ specialist provision in PE. This provides opportunities for staff to develop their current skills and knowledge within PE as they work closely alongside the specialist.
- Extra-curricular opportunities are extensive and are closely analysed to ensure equality of access. They successfully encourage disadvantaged pupils to enrich their learning experience. Many pupils take part in sporting activities and they can clearly explain the link between keeping active and overall health.
- Pupils are extremely well prepared for life in modern Britain. The development of British values is highly effective and this is evident in pupils' discussions, written work and displays across the school. As a result of the school's work, pupils demonstrate high levels of tolerance and respect for one another as well as for adults.

- The funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very effectively targeted. There are increasing numbers of pupils who have very specific needs and they receive precise and valuable support to achieve well, given their relative starting points.
- The local authority has identified considerable strengths in leadership at all levels within the school. School leaders have provided support for other schools and the headteacher has been designated as a local leader of education.

Governance of the school

- Governors are passionate and tenacious in their pursuit of excellence. They do not shy away from challenging school leaders. This is evident from the minutes of meetings, which show a high level of challenge. Governors therefore effectively hold the school to account.
- Governors know the school very well and have very productive relationships with leaders and staff. Governors and staff shared a joint training 'away day' to work on priorities for school improvement. This ensures that the direction and focus of school improvement are developed collaboratively with drive and ambition.
- Governors are keen to ensure that pupils' views are heard in relation to the impact of school improvement. Pupils' representatives, in their role of 'child governors', attend committee meetings. They write and submit their own minutes alongside the school's published minutes. Pupils are fully empowered to be part of democracy in action and governors are enabled to hear pupils' voices first hand.
- Governors ensure that all statutory duties are met, including those relating to safeguarding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have made sure that all safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose.
- Visitors to the school are made aware of the importance of safety from the moment they enter. Systems are in place to ensure that the appropriate checks are carried out in relation to visitors, staff and those adults who have access to pupils on site.
- Staff and governors have a good understanding of child protection procedures within the school. Documentation is clear and concise, completed appropriately by staff and forwarded to the designated safeguarding lead without delay.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe with a focus on online safety. Pupil representatives have been trained to offer support to their peers in relation to any concerns raised about internet safety. This is known as the GIST ('Garswood Internet Safety Team').
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and can explain how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that the staff have received appropriate training, including in the prevention of radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge. They plan sequences of lessons effectively, ensuring that every child is appropriately challenged. Pupils therefore make accelerated and rapid progress.
- Teachers' effective questioning inspires pupils to justify their answers, explain their reasoning and extend their vocabulary. Teachers expect pupils to think carefully and deeply about their work. As a result, pupils are confident and articulate in their verbal and written responses. Occasionally, teachers ask too many questions in quick succession and this can reduce the quality of response from pupils.
- Classroom learning environments are thoughtfully designed and stimulate the senses. Pupils are able to connect to learning through dynamic and purposeful displays. These are referred to during lessons to remind pupils of previous learning and embed pupils' knowledge.
- Phonics is taught exceptionally well. Teachers use inspiring approaches in the teaching and learning of phonics. This develops pupils' curiosity and imagination and promotes high levels of sustained concentration and independence. Owing to the excellent teaching of phonics, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2016 was above the national figure.
- Teachers present reading to pupils through high-quality texts. Pupils develop their comprehension skills extremely effectively. Teachers use assessment information to plan challenging learning experiences in reading for pupils and have consistently high expectations of pupils' outcomes. For example, in a lesson focused on personification, in response to a teacher's questioning, a pupil responded, 'Crystallised snowflakes dance.' The majority of pupils are making excellent progress in reading.
- Pupils are eager to write. Teachers provide stimulating contexts, such as external visits or visitors to the school to provide a strong purpose for writing. Pupils draft, edit and improve their writing to ensure that it is of a high quality. Pupils' progress in writing is impressive.
- Leaders have ensured that there is effective, individualised support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils are supported in their learning through accurate assessment and careful planning. This enables precise learning activities to support and ensure rapid progress. As a result, the rate of progress of these pupils is approaching that of other pupils with the same starting points.
- Leaders and teachers make sure that disadvantaged pupils receive additional focused support. Teachers are clear about what to provide for pupils due to highly focused and detailed analysis by senior leaders and accurate teacher assessment. Therefore, the majority of disadvantaged pupils do at least as well as their peers.
- Pupils' application of English and mathematical skills across the curriculum is of a high quality. Leaders of curriculum subjects other than English, mathematics and science need to sharpen the depth and coverage of subject-specific knowledge and skills.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are extremely considerate and care for one another.
- Pupils are provided with excellent opportunities to develop responsibility and personal qualities through the wider focus on business enterprise. For example, pupils readily take on the responsibility of running the key stage 2 shop, 'Garsmart'. Pupils are involved in all aspects of the business model and gain important knowledge and understanding of enterprise. This helps to prepare them to be thoughtful citizens in school and in wider society.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are given an active voice within the school community. School councillors are elected annually and are enthusiastic to be involved in improving their school. They are provided with genuine opportunities to make a difference. Pupils most recently improved playground provision in order to promote physical well-being.
- Pupils are creatively taught how to assess risk within the natural environment. As part of their curriculum work, they are eager to take part in the forest school. Pupils are therefore very well equipped to understand how to keep themselves and others safe in different situations and settings.
- Pupils' individual needs are well catered for through excellent pastoral provision. Pupils who are more vulnerable are provided with robust support plans to ensure that their well-being and care are paramount. Therefore, they feel safe and are well looked after.
- Pupils are happy at school and report that bullying is rare. Any incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively by staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are highly attentive in lessons and demonstrate high levels of self-control.
- Pupils are extremely well mannered, courteous and polite. Their conduct around school and in lessons is impeccable. Relationships among pupils are exemplary, and low-level disruption in class is rare.
- Leaders and teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are provided with a balanced reward system which identifies individual, team and school successes. Pupils are therefore proud of their achievements and of their school.
- Pupils' overall attendance is above the national average and has improved further this year. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved this year as a result of leaders' diligent work with these pupils and their families. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance has not yet reached the level of their peers and this continues to be a focus for the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress from their relative starting points. By the end of key stage 2, their achievement is well above national standards in all areas. Given pupils' starting points, this represents outstanding outcomes.
- Children quickly settle into school routines and make excellent progress in early years. By the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development is consistently higher than the national figure and is rising.
- The number of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was above the national standard in 2016. Pupils who took the phonics re-check in Year 2 were highly successful and in line with national standards.
- Pupils' progress across the school is substantial and sustained. Pupils' attainment exceeds national averages in reading, writing, mathematics, science, grammar, punctuation and spelling. Leaders have identified reading as a focus for school improvement through the school's own improvement plan. This indicates the relentless drive of the school leaders to aim for the highest standards and outcomes.
- Most-able pupils are challenged well. Pupils' outcomes are particularly strong at the end of key stage 2 in writing, mathematics, grammar, punctuation and spelling. A higher proportion of pupils achieve at the higher standard than is seen nationally. Pupils therefore have excellent fluency in their numeracy skills and enthusiastically approach challenging problems with great confidence. Equally, pupils produce high-quality pieces of writing as these are often based on real-life contexts with a purposeful audience. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils, although few in number, make good progress and attain well overall. The school uses the pupil premium funding extremely well and seeks to remove barriers to learning in order to maximise curriculum development opportunities. The school has previously won the government's recognition award for the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Last year, a number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not attain as highly as their peers in key stage 1. However, current school data, evidence in books and classroom observations show that disadvantaged pupils make as much progress as their peers and sometimes more. The needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are very effectively met through the precise identification of support and targeting of funding and classroom activities which are well matched to capabilities.
- Pupils' application of core skills across the curriculum is of a very high standard. This is particularly evident in history. One pupil wrote about war: 'Whines of injured horses and the screams of dying men soared through the rage and fury of the battle.'

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Parents are encouraged to promote close partnership with school at the earliest opportunity. They are highly positive about the school and feel that their knowledge of their own child is fully taken into account when teachers plan future learning. Staff ensure that parents are kept fully informed about their children's achievement and progress. This relationship contributes to ensuring that children make the best possible progress.
- Leaders are very effective and ambitious for the children in their care. The recent addition of a Nursery Year, in January 2015, will enable the school to benefit from the improved transition opportunities between pre-school and school-age children.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding procedures are effective. Staff have received the appropriate level of training. All welfare requirements are met. Staff have been trained in paediatric first aid. Children therefore are happy and feel safe and secure.
- Leaders use additional funding, through the early years pupil premium, very effectively to support children's language development. They carefully measure the impact of the language intervention programme. This demonstrates a high success rate and diminishes the differences in children's outcomes in relation to listening and attention.
- Teachers provide a very stimulating learning environment for the children. Children demonstrate high levels of enjoyment, sustained concentration and respect for others. They relish engagement with the outdoor area which incorporates a texture kitchen, a covered outdoor learning area and a hobbit door which leads to an intriguing forest area for exploration. Children are therefore fully engaged with their learning.
- Teachers and leaders are rigorous and ensure that a broad learning curriculum is in place. Teachers deliver excellent practice based on a deep knowledge of the needs of individual children. Staff accurately assess children's learning and use this to identify what children need to do next, so that activities and experiences meet children's needs. This leads to consistently high levels of progress and outcomes for children. A high proportion of children achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year when compared with national figures for the early years foundation stage profile. Children are therefore well prepared academically, socially and emotionally for the next stage of their education.
- Children's outcomes in the early years are consistently high across all areas of learning. Differences between the attainment of girls and that of boys have decreased over time. The proportion of boys who reach a good level of development is not as high as that of girls but is still well above that of the national profile figure for boys. This is due to the high level of care and learning provided for children in the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	104778
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10032331

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Councillor Sue Murphy
Headteacher	Mrs Pam Potter
Telephone number	01744 678290
Website	www.garswoodprimary.co.uk
Email address	garswood@sthelens.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 October 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Garswood Primary School is smaller than the average primary school.
- The school extended its provision to include a Nursery Class in January 2015.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups. Many observations were undertaken with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, special educational needs and/or disabilities leader, pastoral officer, senior leaders and middle leaders. The lead inspector met with six governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Discussions were held with pupils. The lead inspector listened to pupils to read.
- The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the local authority representative.
- The lead inspector met with groups of pupils from across the age range and talked to pupils in lessons. Inspectors observed pupils at breaktimes and lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents including: the school's self-evaluation; the school's plans for improvement; analysis of the school's performance data; information on the progress of particular pupil groups; information relating to the attendance of pupils; safeguarding records; the single central record; and minutes of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work across year groups, pupil groups and subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents and considered 56 responses from the online parent questionnaire.

Inspection team

Gaynor Rennie, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sheila O'Keeffe	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Burrow	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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