

Inspection of a good school: Tarvin Primary School

Heath Drive, Tarvin, Chester, Cheshire CH3 8LS

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 2023

Outcome

Tarvin Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Tarvin enjoy attending school and they achieve well. They find lessons interesting and they appreciate the many visits on offer, such as to the zoo. Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These include music, sports and nature clubs. Pupils were pleased with their recent community exhibition: Our Planet.

Parents and carers spoken to at the start of the inspection were unanimously happy with the school. This includes some of those who have children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Typically, parents said that staff go out of their way to help pupils.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' work and their behaviour. Pupils are attentive in lessons and they contribute confidently to discussions. They listen carefully to each other, are well mannered and kind. For example, in assemblies, pupils encourage those pupils who gain awards for their effort and for their work.

Children in the Reception Year enjoy learning. They are confident, friendly and articulate, despite missing out on some aspects of their social development due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. They get off to a great start in learning to read and write.

Pupils know what it means to be tolerant and a good friend. Pupils respect the way that staff deal with any incidents of bullying or unkind behaviour. Pupils are very proud of their school.

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

Tarvin joined the Sandstone Academy Trust in 2020. As a new academy, establishing the most effective ways of working are developing well. The head of school and executive headteacher share responsibilities effectively. However, leaders recognise there is more to do in communicating some of the benefits the school receives from being part of the trust to parents.

Leaders are ambitious for every pupil at Tarvin. They continually invest time and resources into improving the curriculum for pupils. For example, leaders have successfully used ongoing training to develop staff's knowledge and confidence to teach different subjects, such as French. This is a strength of leaders' work. The impact of leaders' actions on improving the quality of education that pupils receive is tangible.

Leaders have made reading a top priority. The ongoing training that staff receive to support and develop the teaching of reading is paying dividends. The regular phonics coaching sessions for staff are contributing to pupils' rapid progress through the programme. Younger pupils are skilfully taught to read and write in small groups. Pupils who have finished the reading scheme, known as 'free readers', choose books from the school's well-stocked libraries. However, checking that these pupils read accurately and with expression is not as systematic. This hinders how well some pupils develop their fluency in reading. Pupils' handwriting is a strength. Leaders define the expectations clearly from Reception onwards and staff ensure pupils are supported to achieve well.

Leaders have purchased schemes of work that provide a framework for most subjects. Subject leaders are working systematically with staff to evaluate and adapt the content of the schemes where necessary. For example, the science subject leader is adapting the 'working scientifically' part of the scheme with staff. This is to ensure the mathematics needed to do the science, such as measuring, is taught first. Across the curriculum, staff plan series of lessons that ensure pupils know more about the subject by the end of the module. They check effectively whether pupils have learned what they intended. For example, a practical mathematics activity quickly enabled staff to identify which pupils could make 20p, 50p and £1 from coins. Assessment systems are used well by staff and leaders.

Children in the early years have fun in school. In the Reception class, the climbing wall and outdoor area are used well to encourage children's physical development. Children enjoy singing. For example, they perform the doubles counting song with gusto. Early years staff and subject leaders work well together to ensure that what children learn in the Reception Year prepares them well for the curriculum in key stages 1 and 2.

Pupils with SEND are included well in all aspects of school life. They are provided with extra help from adults in lessons where appropriate. Some parents raised concerns on Ofsted Parent View about the quality of education for pupils with SEND. However, the inspector found that leaders are working effectively with staff, parents and other outside agencies to identify and support pupils with SEND well.

Pupils have a clear sense of what is fair and unfair. Leaders help pupils to articulate their feelings and listen carefully to what they say. Pupils appreciate the role of the school council and how they are involved in making decisions. For example, organising how different zones of the play areas are used during playtimes. Pupils are respectful towards adults and each other in lessons and around the school. They have a mature attitude to taking turns.

One class in Year 6 has experienced unavoidable disruption to their lessons this academic year. Leaders are mitigating the impact on pupils' progress effectively and are being well supported by the trust. Staff are highly supportive of each other. Leaders, trustees and governors protect staff's workload and well-being. Staff enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff are well trained to identify any potential issues that pupils may face. Staff are caring and they know pupils well. They are alert to any changes in pupils' behaviour and respond quickly.

Leaders secure additional advice, when required. They work well with outside organisations, for example local child-protection agencies. Strong systems exist for staff to report concerns. Trustees work well with leaders to ensure the safer recruitment of staff.

The wider curriculum supports pupils' well-being effectively. There is a strong focus on belonging to the Tarvin family.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all parents feel well informed about the rationale for decisions that leaders make, particularly with regard to SEND provision. Leaders should consider more effective ways of communicating with parents to ensure that they feel well informed about key decisions and priorities that affect their children's education.
- Pupils get off to a good start in reading. To ensure this rate of progress continues in key stage 2, leaders should work on pupils' successful transition from the reading scheme. Staff should build on the strong systems for teaching reading that exist in key stage 1, and adapt them to promote accurate and fluent reading among older pupils.

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, Tarvin Primary to be good in December 2015.

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

Unique reference number	147995
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10268732
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	265
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Taylor
Head of School	Ruth Cadwallader
Website	www.tarvin.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined with Tarporley High School and Eaton Primary School to form the Sandstone Trust in 2020. The two primary schools share an executive headteacher. Each primary school has a head of school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation documentation and their improvement plans. The inspector also reviewed the information on the school's website.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading and English, and mathematics and science. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, and spoke to teachers and to some pupils

about their work. The inspector also looked at pupils' work and spoke with staff about the curriculum in some other subjects.

- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils read.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, subject leaders, including the early years leader, the safeguarding leader, teaching assistants and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO).
- Meetings were also held with the chair of the local governing body, the chief executive officer of the trust and one of the trustees.
- The inspector met with leaders about the school's safeguarding procedures. She reviewed policies and records relating to safeguarding and behaviour. The inspector spoke to pupils, and parents and staff about pupils' safety.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. She spoke formally with groups of pupils as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around the school. She also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and also by telephone during the inspection.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Gill Jones, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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