

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Matthew Arnold Primary School

Dingle Lane, Liverpool, Merseyside L8 9UB

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 May 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that aspects of the school's work may not be as strong as at the time of the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at this school. They value the positive relationships that they have with their teachers. They are cared for and looked after. Pupils get along well with one another. They enjoy using the range of equipment available at breaktimes and lunchtimes, such as the outdoor trim trail and ball games.

The school is ambitious for what pupils, should achieve, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils rise to the school's high expectations in the core subjects of English and mathematics. In some other subjects, the curriculum is less effective. This impacts on how well some pupils achieve.

Staff expect pupils to behave well. Pupils do so because they know the 'Matthew Arnold Way,' which sets out the school's expectations of them. Pupils learn how to manage their emotions and feelings. This helps them to become more resilient and better able to deal with any challenges.

Pupils attend a range of clubs and extra-curricular activities. These include choir, football and computing. These help pupils to develop their talents and interests. All pupils have the chance to play the ukulele. Pupils like looking through the 'special moments' book that shows the many visitors to school and the trips that pupils go on.

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

The school has successfully raised the profile of reading. Many pupils read well and enthusiastically. Children begin to learn to read as soon as they start at the school. Overall, phonics is taught well. The school provides effective support for pupils who are in

the earliest stages of learning to read. The texts that pupils read independently, or have read to them, have been carefully considered. They are rich and varied and allow pupils to learn about lives that are different to their own. The reading curriculum links with themes such as diversity, equality and different cultures. This helps pupils to deepen their understanding of these.

In each subject, the school has identified the important knowledge and skills that pupils should learn. This helps teachers to know what to teach and when to teach it. However, in some subjects including writing, teachers' checks on pupils' learning do not consistently identify any gaps or misunderstandings. Pupils do not make strong connections between their current and previous learning. In these areas, pupils do not build their knowledge of the curriculum as well as they should.

The school is effective at identifying pupils' SEND early. The school is committed to catering for pupils' additional needs, regardless of how complex they are. It helps pupils to develop as confident and independent individuals who can manage their feelings and emotions. However, adaptations for some pupils with SEND do not consistently help them access the intended curriculum. This hampers opportunities for these pupils to learn all that they should.

Many children in the early years have learned key listening skills. They also know how to share with their peers. Children in the early years benefit from being in an environment where communication and language are prioritised. Staff interact skilfully with children while they are playing. This develops children's vocabulary and oracy skills.

To improve attendance, leaders have applied a clear strategy. They identify pupils with low attendance and offer support and challenge to families when needed. As a result, overall attendance has improved. However, the school's systems are not as effective as they could be for some pupils who are persistently absent. These pupils miss important learning.

The school's personal, social and health education offer provides pupils with the knowledge that they need to be well-rounded, open-minded citizens. Pupils know how to live healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe online. They relish the opportunities to take part in residential trips. These experiences build pupils' independence and team-working skills.

The school and governors work well together to provide pupils with a broad education. Governors understand the strengths and priorities of the school and complete all their statutory duties. Whilst most staff enjoy working at the school, some voiced concerns about their workload. However, the school has recognised this and is seeking ways to address it.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, including writing, assessment strategies are not used consistently well to identify gaps in pupils' learning and to inform decisions about what to teach next. As a result, some pupils do not build their knowledge well enough over time. The school should ensure that teachers use assessment techniques effectively so that gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified and addressed.
- The adaptations made for pupils with SEND, are not consistently well chosen. As a result, these pupils are sometimes not supported to access the intended curriculum. The school should ensure that any adaptations help pupils build on what they already know and can do and are closely aligned to their needs and the intended curriculum outcomes.
- The school's work to increase pupils' attendance levels has not been as effective as it could be. In particular, a small number of pupils are persistently absent. These pupils miss important learning. The school should continue to strengthen and develop its attendance processes to improve the attendance of these pupils.
- The school has implemented strategies to support staff well-being. However, these are not fully effective. As a result, some staff have concerns regarding their workload and well-being. The school should further refine its strategies to check the impact of its actions on staff workload.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 school to be good for overall effectiveness in 4 and 5 February 2020.

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	104557
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10366718
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	282
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Shelley Pennington
Headteacher	Louise Evans
Website	www.matthewarnold.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed.
- The school has a specially resourced provision. It is designated for up to 32 pupils aged between four and 11 with speech, language and communication difficulties. Some pupils have an educational, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The school has a 40-place provision for 2-year-olds.
- This school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 4 read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector spoke with members of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- The inspector looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. She observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- The inspector took account of the responses to the online parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. She took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Helen Friend, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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