

Inspection of a good school: Forefield Junior School

Forefield Lane, Crosby, Liverpool, Merseyside L23 9TJ

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 July 2021

Outcome

Forefield Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school and the wealth of resources it has to offer. They recognise how important it is to attend regularly. Pupils particularly value the well-stocked school library and meeting visiting authors, both in person and virtually. Pupils work hard to live out their school values. They know that leaders and staff expect them to do their best. Pupils are proud of their school.

Pupils play happily together on the school's extensive playgrounds. They focus on their learning in lessons and trust staff to help them if they find things difficult. Pupils take pride in their work and achieve well.

Pupils take an active part in raising money for charity. This includes supporting local charities close to their hearts. They enjoy taking on responsibilities. The reading champions take their role very seriously. They encourage all pupils to love reading as much as they do.

Pupils who feel anxious visit the school's 'Care and Advice for Everyone' room, known fondly as the CAFÉ. Pupils feel listened to. They know that staff will help to sort any problems out quickly. Pupils understand about cyber bullying and other types of bullying. They trust the adults in school to quickly deal with any behaviour or bullying incidents. Pupils feel safe and well supported by the adults in school.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that sets out the important knowledge and skills that pupils will learn in all subjects. Curriculum leaders know their subjects well. They are passionate about them. Leaders support all staff to teach the curriculum well. This includes making useful adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, such as using practical resources in mathematics. As a result, all pupils achieve well.

In subjects such as mathematics and geography, leaders have benefited from training to

develop their subject leader expertise. They have carefully considered the order in which new knowledge is taught. They plan for pupils to build up their knowledge over time and identify where pupils may need extra support. In geography, pupils develop a strong sense of where places are located. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they are able to apply their learning to work out complex mathematical problems. For example, they are able to plan in detail when to take a family holiday and what it will cost. Pupils are well prepared for the challenges of secondary school mathematics. However, leaders of some other subjects are at an earlier stage of setting out the order in which the identified knowledge should be taught.

The school is a book-rich environment. All staff foster a love of reading in the pupils. Pupils enjoy having books read to them. Teachers are trained to teach pupils to read with understanding. They introduce pupils to challenging texts. By the time they leave Year 6, most pupils are confident readers.

The COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic has meant that more pupils than is usually the case start in Year 3 unable to read fluently. Leaders have taken swift action to address gaps in these pupils' phonics knowledge. Pupils who struggle to read practise reading regularly. Well-trained support staff help them to catch up. However, some teaching staff have not been trained to teach phonics. This means that pupils who struggle to read are sometimes not supported to develop their phonics knowledge within lessons.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen attentively and follow teachers' instructions. This helps pupils to learn well. Before the pandemic, pupils took part in a rich array of enrichment activities. Staff and pupils look forward to safely resuming these. In the meantime, leaders have maintained a focus on pupils' wider development. Pupils have enjoyed a number of alternative experiences, including virtual tours of synagogues and museums.

Pupils are taught to value uniqueness. This helps them to understand and respect difference. Pupils talked knowledgeably about diverse types of families, different beliefs and religions. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Staff appreciate that leaders consider their workload. They spoke warmly of the support that they receive from their senior colleagues. Teachers who start their career at the school simply do not want to leave.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and governors are well trained. They have a strong understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff know the pupils and the local area well. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. This includes while they are using social media or other technology and while they are out and about in the community.

Leaders provide vulnerable pupils and their families with timely support, including from the school's emotional literacy support assistants. This support was particularly significant during the periods of national lockdown. Leaders also work closely with other agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all staff have been trained to teach phonics. This means that pupils are sometimes not supported to catch up within reading lessons. Leaders should ensure that all staff are trained to teach phonics. This will help to ensure that pupils who struggle with reading receive the help that they need to read fluently and accurately.
- While all subject leaders have identified the key knowledge that pupils will learn, not all have planned out when this will be taught. In these subjects, it is less clear how pupils' learning will build towards clearly defined end points. Leaders should revise plans to help pupils build on what they already know.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 17 November 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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 [here](#).

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	104871
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10194684
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Charles Breeze
Headteacher	Paul Swift
Website	www.forefieldjuniors.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	17 November 2015

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous section 8 inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. They met with a group of governors, including the vice-chair, and a representative of Sefton local authority.
- Inspectors considered the 56 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 55 comments submitted via the free-text facility. Inspector considered the 22 responses to the staff survey and the 122 responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around school, in lessons and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation for safeguarding, including the record of required checks carried out on school staff. They spoke with staff and governors to

check their understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about safeguarding.

- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors evaluated the school's approach to the curriculum. They considered reading, mathematics, geography and art in depth as part of this inspection. Inspectors met with subject leaders and visited lessons. They observed children and pupils reading to a trusted adult. Inspectors spoke with teachers and pupils. They viewed examples of pupils' work and spoke with pupils about their learning.

Inspection team

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tina Cleugh

Ofsted Inspector

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