

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Delamere School

Irlam Road, Flixton, Manchester M41 6AP

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Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

## **Outcome**

Delamere School continues to be an outstanding school.

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

Pupils flourish in this welcoming and nurturing school. Pupils' love of school is reflected in their excellent attendance. They are happy learning and playing with their friends.

Pupils benefit from leaders' high expectations coupled with tailored support from highly trained staff. They develop confidence and increased independence by accessing the attractive and well-resourced learning environment and the carefully designed curriculum. This ensures that pupils, almost all of whom have education, health and care (EHC) plans, make exceptional progress from their starting points.

Pupils comment that staff are kind and always on hand to help them. Leaders and staff deal very effectively with their concerns, including any cases of unkindness or bullying. This helps pupils to feel safe and secure.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. Staff know each and every pupil incredibly well. They understand their needs. This means that staff know how best to help individual pupils when they are struggling with their feelings.

Pupils have a wealth of opportunities to play an active role in their school and the local community. Pupils take part in cultural events such as ballet workshops and theatre performances. They access music tuition, swimming lessons and a range of sports competitions to pursue and showcase their talents and interests. Every success is celebrated.

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

Leaders of this pioneering and forward-facing school have an unwavering commitment to provide the very best possible education for their pupils. They are highly reflective and never complacent. They are determined to build on their successes so that, over time, pupils can continue to access an education that is of the highest quality.

Leaders have implemented a broad, balanced and interesting curriculum designed with meticulous detail. Against this ambitious backdrop, leaders ensure that the targets from pupils' EHC plans are seamlessly interwoven into all aspects of the curriculum. Subject leaders provide clear guidance for teachers about the order of learning. This ensures that pupils progress through the curriculum and that there are no limits on pupils' achievement. Many pupils excel, particularly in the arts.

Teachers use their strong expertise to further break down the content of subject curriculums into precisely detailed goals to address the individual needs of pupils. Staff adopt a team approach when reviewing pupils' learning. They adjust their approaches regularly to ensure that pupils' needs are always fully met.

Leaders work with experts to further extend the range of approaches that their exceptionally knowledgeable staff have to hand. This means that staff select the most effective strategies and resources to shape provision and support for pupils.

All staff understand the importance of helping pupils to communicate as soon as they start school. Well-informed staff use their knowledge of a myriad of tailored strategies and resources to help pupils to develop their language and communication. For example, they use visual signing and picture-based communication boards to help pupils develop their attention skills and to encourage them to make choices and engage in activities.

From the early years, books, stories, rhymes and songs feature prominently in all aspects of the curriculum. Leaders have ensured that staff have been well trained in a range of effective approaches to teaching reading, including phonics. Leaders have implemented a clear phonics programme. Children start to learn about the sounds letters make as soon as they are ready. Some pupils also receive tailored individual support to develop their fluency in reading and writing. They are motivated to read independently by the wide range of appealing books on offer to them.

Staff are exceptionally responsive to pupils' feeling and needs, developing excellent relationships and strong communication channels with pupils. Staff deal sensitively with any problems that arise when pupils struggle to manage their feelings and behaviour. This means that pupils' learning is rarely disrupted.

At the core of leaders' philosophy is the deep-rooted belief that pupils should be exposed to every possible opportunity to ensure that their potential is realised. Leaders organise a wide range of meaningful experiences to broaden pupils' horizons. For example, pupils have helped local businesses to be more inclusive by assisting them to introduce alternative methods of communication. Staff think carefully about each pupil, and they plan activities that suit their needs and interests.

Members of the governing body work strategically. They are knowledgeable and active in their work in supporting school leaders to achieve their ambitions for all pupils.

Parents and carers are resoundingly positive about the difference that the school makes to their children. They also value the support they receive from the school.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. This helps to heighten their awareness of the small signs that might indicate that pupils could be at risk of or suffering harm.

Staff follow leaders' agreed procedures to quickly report their concerns. These are actioned swiftly and effectively by leaders. The recently expanded safeguarding team uses its strong local knowledge to provide effective support to pupils and their families.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They learn about consent from an early age and how to communicate their feelings. Pupils learn about avoiding risks online and staying safe around drugs and medicines.

## Background

When we have judged outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 school to be outstanding in June 2017.

## 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>	106394
<b>Local authority</b>	Trafford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241775
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	123
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Lorraine Howells
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sally Judge
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://delamere.trafford.sch.uk">http://delamere.trafford.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 and 21 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The number of pupils on roll at the school has increased over recent years.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been some changes to the leadership structure, including the appointment of an assistant headteacher.
- The school caters for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) broadly nominated as generic learning difficulties. All of the pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 at the school have an EHC plan. One or two children in the early years have EHC assessments in progress. Many pupils have complex learning difficulties, including autism spectrum disorder and sensory difficulties. In addition, some pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties and medical needs.
- Pupils attend the school from Trafford local authority.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

## 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 leaders and have taken

that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other leaders. They spoke with subject leaders and other members of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with six members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke to the school improvement partner and an educational consultant who works with school leaders.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons. They spoke with pupils to discuss their views of the school, their learning, their behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping children safe. They reviewed documentation, including information about attendance and bullying, and spoke to leaders, governors, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following areas of the school's curriculum provision: communication and language; early reading; social, emotional and mental health; and science. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' targets. The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also reviewed other aspects of the school's curriculum.
- Inspectors met with leaders who have overall and specific responsibility for reviewing EHC plans and reviewed samples of documentation relating to SEND.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and considered their views shared through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. This included the free-text comments and other written communication received from parents. The lead inspector met with two parents and reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents shared by school leaders, including the school improvement plan, the minutes taken at governing body meetings and leaders' self-evaluation documents.

## **Inspection team**

Janette Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Charlotte Oles

His Majesty's Inspector

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