

# Inspection of Platt Bridge Community School

Rivington Avenue, Platt Bridge, Wigan, Lancashire WN2 5NG

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Inspection dates: 10 and 11 July 2024

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| <b>Overall effectiveness</b> | <b>Good</b>        |
| The quality of education     | <b>Good</b>        |
| Behaviour and attitudes      | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Personal development         | <b>Good</b>        |
| Leadership and management    | <b>Good</b>        |
| Early years provision        | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Previous inspection grade    | Outstanding        |

The executive headteacher of this school is Sue Darbyshire. This school is part of Community First Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sue Darbyshire, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ruth Rule-Mullen.

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 11 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

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

This is a warm and welcoming school where pupils are happy and safe. They are treated with kindness and respect. Staff provide high-quality emotional support for pupils who need it. Pupils show their appreciation for the care that they receive by behaving impeccably well. They rarely need reminding to do their best.

Children in the early years settle quickly at school. They explore the engaging activities that staff design for them with zest. Older pupils are keen to make full use of their talents and interests. They embrace the wide range of experiences on offer to them, including the array of clubs. Pupils particularly enjoy taking part in residential trips which take them far beyond their local community.

Pupils respond eagerly to the school's high expectations and aspirations for their achievement. They typically achieve well across a broad range of subjects. When needed, the school provides additional support for pupils to enable them to take part in all aspects of school life. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils who have a place in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision) are well supported to be ready to learn alongside their classmates.

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

Leaders at all levels understand their roles and responsibilities, including those relating to school governance, well. Members of the local academy board carry out their roles earnestly. Trust leaders provide confident, strategic leadership. They ensure that staff have the resources that they need to provide pupils with the best start in life.

The early reading curriculum is a strength of the school. From the start of the provision for two-year-olds, children are immersed in a world of much-loved songs, rhymes and stories. This develops children's vocabulary by introducing them to words that they would seldom hear or use in everyday speech. Children are well prepared to access the school's phonics programme.

Expert staff ensure that children in the Reception Year and pupils in key stage 1 learn quickly how to read an increasing range of words using their phonics knowledge. Pupils practise their reading using books that match the sounds that they are learning. This helps them to develop their confidence.

The school ensures that pupils keep pace with the phonics programme. Pupils who need extra help with their reading benefit from the support of well-trained staff. Most pupils become accurate readers by the end of key stage 1. Older pupils typically build well on this positive start. However, the school's most recent published data does not reflect this. In 2023, a significant proportion of pupils left Year 6 having made below-average progress in reading. The school has acted decisively to improve its reading curriculum. Current pupils read with greater fluency. This eases their access to the whole curriculum.

The early years curriculum is designed and delivered with great expertise. Staff check children's learning carefully. They ensure that children build firmly on what they already know and can do. At each stage of the early years, children are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps in learning.

The curriculum in key stages 1 and 2 is also carefully organised to enable pupils to successfully develop their knowledge over time. Curriculum leaders are knowledgeable about the subjects that they lead. In most subjects they make sure that staff have the expertise to deliver curriculums well. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to explain new learning clearly to pupils. They check that pupils have fully grasped what has been taught before they introduce something new. Pupils build their learning securely. They achieve well in these subjects.

In a small number of other subjects, including aspects of English, there have been insufficient opportunities to develop staff's subject knowledge, and to check how well curriculums are delivered. The curriculum is not delivered as effectively in these subjects as in most others. Pupils' knowledge is uneven as a result. This includes pupils' knowledge of grammar and spelling as well as their ability to write in a legible handwriting style.

Pupils demonstrate extremely positive attitudes to learning and to school. They attend well. Staff support pupils who find it more challenging to manage their own behaviour with genuine sensitivity. Pupils with SEND, including those in the specially resourced provision, achieve well. They benefit from the expertise of staff in identifying and meeting their varying needs.

The school carefully considers pupils' wider development. Pupils learn how to manage money. They relish opportunities to develop their entrepreneurial skills. Pupils develop a secure understanding of what is right and wrong. This includes when thinking about issues such as knife crime and about the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse. Pupils are well prepared to become active and responsible citizens.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a few subjects, the school does not check effectively enough that the intended curriculum is being delivered consistently well. This means that it does not identify when teachers need further support to make sure that pupils learn all that they should. Some pupils' knowledge is not as secure as it could be in these subjects as a result. The school should sharpen its insight into the delivery of the curriculum and the impact that it is having on pupils.

- The strong start that children in the early years make with their fundamental writing skills is not built upon consistently well as pupils move into key stage 1 and beyond. Some pupils' written work is hampered by weaknesses in their spelling, handwriting and grammatical knowledge. The school should ensure that these fundamental skills receive greater attention in key stage 1 and that they are sufficiently embedded in key stage 2.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 139300   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Wigan  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10337697   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy converter  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 2 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 482  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Ruth Rule-Mullen   |
| <b>CEO of trust</b>                        | Sue Darbyshire   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Sue Darbyshire (Executive Headteacher)<br>Carly Bozdoğan (Head of School)      |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.plattbridge.wigan.sch.uk">www.plattbridge.wigan.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | 25 and 26 June 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005                 |

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Community First Academy Trust.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for five pupils with SEND aged between four and 11 years old. Places at this specially resourced provision are commissioned by the local authority. The specially resourced provision supports pupils with specific learning difficulties. At the time of the inspection, there were four pupils on roll in the specially resourced provision. Each of these pupils has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The school operates a breakfast club and after-school provision for pupils.
- The school makes use of one unregistered provision for a small number of pupils.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school’s educational provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, head of school and other leaders in the school.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the board of trustees, including the chair of the trust. She also met with representatives of the local academy board, including the chair of the board.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and a headteacher representative of the local schools consortium.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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 lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 and 2 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, computing, history and art and design. They spoke with the leaders of these areas of the curriculum. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils’ work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- Inspectors also spoke to a sample of pupils about their learning in other areas of the curriculum. They spoke with leaders and reviewed a sample of pupils’ work in these subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences of school. They observed pupils’ behaviour at breaktimes and in lessons. The lead inspector scrutinised leaders’ records of pupils’ behaviour and attendance. There were no responses to Ofsted’s online survey for pupils for inspectors to consider.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and carers as they brought their children to school. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s online survey for staff.

## **Inspection team**

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Niamh Howlett

Ofsted Inspector

Nicky Parkinson

Ofsted Inspector

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