

Inspection of Wild Bank Primary School

Demesne Drive, Stalybridge, Cheshire SK15 2PG

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2024

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
|------------------------------|--|
| The quality of education | Requires improvement |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Requires improvement |
| Leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

The headteacher of this school is Janet Postlethwaite. This school is part of the Victorious Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by Karen Burns, the chief executive officer (CEO), and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andy Hodgkinson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Wild Bank School is a happy place to be. Children settle well in the early years, where they make friends easily. All pupils are welcomed by nurturing staff. Pupils are valued as individuals. They enjoy strong relationships with each other and with adults in the school.

Pupils are starting to respond to the higher aspirations that the school has set for their learning. However, many aspects of the curriculum have only been introduced recently. Pupils currently have gaps in their prior learning. This is preventing them from achieving as well as they should.

Pupils take part in some extra-curricular activities. These include art, construction and sports clubs. They proudly represent their school in competitions.

Pupils value the help that they receive to help them manage their social skills and their emotional and mental health. This includes support from the school dog, Odie, who is a key part of the Wild Bank family. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning.

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

With the support of the trust, the school has recently developed a new curriculum, which is ambitious and meets the needs of pupils well. This curriculum is starting to help pupils to build their knowledge more securely than in the past. This is especially true for children in the early years. This means that children are prepared well for Year 1.

The positive changes to the curriculum are relatively new. This means that the impact of the previous weaker curriculum on pupils' learning has not been fully resolved. This is reflected in the 2023 results from the national tests and assessments. There was a considerable dip in pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Many pupils at the school continue to have gaps in their learning.

In a few subjects, and in all areas of learning in the early years, the key knowledge that pupils should learn has been clearly identified. However, in many subjects, the most important content that pupils in key stages 1 and 2 should learn has not been determined well enough. As a result, some key subject knowledge is not covered in enough depth to help pupils to remember it in the long term.

Staff assess children's knowledge accurately as they progress through the curriculum in the early years. This enables staff to reshape teaching to meet children's needs. As a result, children in the early years remember what they have learned. However, the checks on pupils' knowledge in key stages 1 and 2 do not identify and address the gaps and misconceptions in pupils' prior learning. This hampers pupils' ability to

connect earlier learning with new content. It also hinders their progress through the subject curriculums. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The school has taken effective action to establish a suitable phonics programme. In the Nursery class, children build their knowledge of sounds well. They start to link sounds and letters when they enter the Reception Year to read simple words and sentences. Staff typically deliver the phonics programme well. As a result, most pupils can read accurately by the end of Year 2. However, the support for some of those pupils who do not keep pace with the phonics programme does not enable them to catch up. As a result, these pupils do not read as fluently and confidently as they should.

There are appropriate systems in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, staff are at various stages of using the information that they hold about pupils' needs to adapt their delivery of the curriculum. This means that pupils with SEND make uneven progress through the subject curriculums.

The school's work to improve pupils' conduct has been highly effective. Pupils enjoy their learning. They are keen to do well. They work well together in lessons so that learning is rarely disrupted.

The school's arrangements to promote regular attendance at school are effective. It has a clear oversight of the barriers that prevent some pupils from attending school as often as they should. The school supports these pupils and their families well. As a result, pupils' rates of absence have reduced over time.

The school has established a coherent programme for pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. This ensures that pupils learn and remember some important aspects for their future lives. For example, pupils have a strong understanding of how to maintain appropriate relationships and to respect one another's differences. The school instils a strong understanding of right and wrong and of local and global cultures. However, similar to other areas of the curriculum, some pupils find it difficult to recall their learning. This is because some aspects of learning in the PSHE curriculum are not defined clearly enough to guide teachers on what should be taught.

Trustees are well informed about the actions that the school is taking to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. Staff have welcomed the fresh approach to the curriculum. The actions taken to reduce teachers' workload have ensured that staff have embraced recent changes. They feel valued and they are committed to the vision that the school has set for future improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not defined the essential curriculum knowledge that they want pupils to learn and remember in many subjects, including PSHE. This means that teachers are unclear about what to teach and the order in which they should teach subject content. This hampers pupils from building their knowledge securely over time. The school should ensure that subject curriculums, and the programme for PSHE, are more specific about what pupils should learn so that teachers are better equipped to help pupils develop a secure body of knowledge.
- Teachers' checks on pupils' learning in key stages 1 and 2 are not effective enough. This means that the gaps in pupils' learning, caused by weaknesses in the previous curriculum, are not resolved. This makes it difficult for pupils to benefit from the new curriculums. It hinders their achievement. The school should ensure that teachers have the expertise to check and then address the gaps in pupils' prior learning so that they can progress well through the subject curriculums.
- Some pupils with SEND do not receive the support that they need to access learning. This limits their chance to benefit from the new subject curriculums as well as they should. The school should ensure that teachers adapt their delivery of the curriculum more effectively so that pupils with SEND can learn all that they should.
- The support for some pupils in the early stages of learning to read does not enable them to catch up quickly enough with the phonics programme. This means that these pupils do not read words as well as they should. The school should ensure that these pupils are helped to develop their reading knowledge so that they are able to read with increasing fluency and confidence.

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 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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| Unique reference number | 147917 |
| Local authority | Tameside |
| Inspection number | 10337717 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 158 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Andy Hodgkinson |
| CEO of the trust | Karen Burns |
| Headteacher | Janet Postlethwaite |
| Website | www.wildbank.tameside.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Victorious Academies Trust.
- Wild Bank Primary School converted to become an academy in 2020. When its predecessor school, Wild Bank Primary, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement overall.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

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 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in other subjects, looked at a sample of work in these subjects and spoke with pupils about their work.
- Inspectors heard pupils read individually and as part of classroom activities.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View as well as Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at breaktimes and around the school. They looked at records for behaviour and bullying and spoke with pupils and staff.
- Inspectors discussed the provision in place for pupils' personal development.
- 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.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andy Hunt

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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