



Information about Firs Primary School

The Firs is currently a two form entry primary school in Sale, Cheshire. We are larger than the average primary school and the numbers on roll have increased by 29% in the last three years. We currently have 432 pupils on roll (plus 34 pupils in Nursery). We have a diverse catchment area, including social housing and privately owned properties. As a result of this, we have a very high proportion of pupils (39%) benefitting from free school meals which is much higher than schools nationally. There are currently 26 different languages spoken within the school and the percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is increasing steadily each year. We will be continuing to grow our school to a three form entry primary school starting in September 2021.

We are one of only six schools in Trafford that host an SSC (Small Specialist Class) for ten junior aged children with social communication difficulties and/or complex learning difficulties. These children live across Trafford and places are allocated by the LA. Our ethos is very inclusive and the SSC is an integral part of the school.

We have very high aspirations for all our pupils and pro-actively tackle the barriers to learning that many of our children have. In our 2017 OFSTED, it was noted that “Leaders are determined and uncompromising in their pursuit of a first-class education for all pupils. “Learning at the Firs is designed to develop confident, independent learners that show a positive and resilient attitude.



In recent years we have achieved a number of awards, including: Leading Parent Partnership Award, Basic Skills Quality Mark on four occasions, Healthy Schools, Gold PE Kite Mark, the Silver Anti-bullying award, Wellbeing Award for Schools and the Primary Science Quality Mark.

We have developed a school curriculum that meets the needs of our pupils as well as all statutory requirements including the National Curriculum. The whole curriculum contributes well to pupils’ academic achievement, their physical wellbeing and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Due to the skilled use of collaborative learning techniques and active learning throughout the curriculum, it promotes excellent learning behaviours and high levels of engagement from the children. There are many opportunities for children to debate spiritual, moral and cultural issues, for example within P4C sessions. Pupils therefore show tolerance and respect for differing beliefs and views.

As a result of outstanding teaching, most pupils and groups of pupils on roll in the school, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, those for whom the pupil premium provides support and the most able, make very good progress and achieve well over time. Pupil premium funding is partly directed towards enhancing core skills for the eligible children. For example, our twenty week 1:1 reading intervention (Reading Recovery) is delivered by a highly trained teacher and reading specialist. This is a very effective intervention and on average each child’s reading age increases by at least two years in the twenty week programme. The teacher’s expertise is shared throughout the school via staff training, dissemination of latest innovations and team teaching. Intervention from teachers and skilled support staff is swift, well-organised and effective. It is also constantly evolving based on the needs of the individual children.

The teaching of learners with SEND is a strength of the school and learners with SEND make good and often outstanding progress. Our SSC teacher shares outstanding practice throughout the school and is an invaluable source of support and knowledge for the staff. Due to the wide range of needs that our SSC pupils have, we are quick to identify SEND and put in place appropriate support and liaise with external agencies.

The school is a harmonious community where people get on well together, care for one and other and learn well to respect differences. Children with complex needs in our SSC are integrated into mainstream classes whenever it is appropriate. This has helped to develop a high level of understanding of others' needs between all pupils and is a key element to our school's positive ethos. Pupils are polite, helpful, kind and caring in their attitudes to all.

We have our very own Firs' Farm within the school grounds to provide real-life learning and nurturing experiences for all our children. There are also extensive grounds for outdoor learning opportunities and a "Grow Zone" for fruit and vegetables.

Our curriculum also includes Forest Schools and the children benefit greatly from this learning opportunity.



The overwhelming majority of all pupils' behaviour is outstanding and it is a great strength of the school. Visitors to school invariably comment upon the pupils' excellent behaviour and manners. Pupils' behaviour makes a significant contribution to the excellent ethos for learning. Their very good behaviour in independent, group and whole class work has a very strong impact on their progress in lessons and the quality of learning.



Staff work extremely hard to ensure that all pupils are safe and their well-being is extremely well looked after. All adults in school have positive relationships with the children and take the time to get to know the children very well. This means that we can provide as much support as possible when they are facing challenges at home. A large number of our families have Social Services involvement and it is essential that we work collaboratively with outside agencies. Our Pastoral Manager

plays a central role in supporting the children and families and this support is greatly appreciated by the whole school community. She is able to provide full time, open-door pastoral support to children and families. The post is funded with Pupil Premium funding, as is that of our SCIP worker (Social Care in Partnership with Schools). She provides families with Early Intervention support such as parenting support, housing advice or debt management.

The Board of Governors actively support and challenge the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team, and helps to shape the vision and direction of the school. The Governing Board meets regularly and carries out its statutory duties efficiently.

Our children have a very positive attitude towards learning and they are proud of their achievements in school. By the time they leave the Firs, the overwhelming majority are confident, self-assured young people. Independence and initiative-taking is valued and our learners join in and contribute well to communal activities and extracurricular events.