

St John's Church of England Primary School, Abram

Simpkin Street, Abram, Wigan, Lancashire WN2 5QE

Inspection dates

26–27 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The new leadership team has an accurate view of the school's performance.
- Staff work closely as a team and have a clear understanding of the aims of the school.
- The provisional outcomes at key stage 1 in 2017 were lower than that which leaders expected and not typical of the school. Swift action to address staffing difficulties has been taken by the school. As a result, teaching and learning are good and progress is rising.
- Outcomes of pupils who are meeting the expected standards are in line with national expectations.
- Behaviour around the school is good. Pupils are proud of their school, feel safe and enjoy attending. The personal development and well-being of the pupils are a strength of the school.
- The leadership team closely monitors pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Effective systems to track the progress of the disadvantaged pupils are in place.
- Directors of the Keys Federation Trust play their part in ensuring that St John's Church of England Primary School is an improving school.
- The role of the middle leaders is not fully developed. Subject leaders of the wider curriculum have not had a full impact on raising attainment in the subjects for which they are responsible.
- The vast majority of parents hold the school in high regard and are very pleased with the impact of the new leadership team.
- Recent changes to the teaching staff have ensured that teaching is consistently good across the school. Consequently, pupils make good progress. However, the progress of the disadvantaged middle attaining pupils is not quite as good as that of other groups in mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2 has improved and pupils now make good progress. However, attainment still needs to increase, especially in mathematics, so that it is similar to that of other pupils nationally.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and progress in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that the middle-attaining pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, continue to improve throughout the school
 - ensuring that tasks are challenging and sustaining the interests of pupils.
- Further develop the skills of middle leaders so that the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility improves further and leaders can show the impact of the changes they have made.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The acting principal displays a quiet determination to ensure that each pupil receives the best possible education. The directors are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have been instrumental in ensuring that St John's is an improving school. As one parent told the inspectors, 'The changes to the staff and management of the school have been the major factor in the improvement of the school.' Parents also feel that, 'Over the last few years, the school has grown in a positive way.'
- Leadership roles are distributed well. There is a well-planned approach for the middle leaders in their roles of subject leadership. Middle leaders monitor the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility and analyse the progress that groups of pupils make. They are proud of the impact they have made in sports, religious education and science. However, not all subject leaders make an impact on raising the quality of teaching and learning. This is due to existing teachers taking on the leadership of new subjects and some being new to the role of subject leadership.
- Leaders tackle any underperformance with vigour. For example, leaders immediately set the wheels in motion to address the low provisional results in key stage 1 in 2017 and the slow progress of key stage 2 pupils in 2016. Leaders organised extra training and appointed new members to the teaching staff. As a result, pupils' progress has quickened, and teaching and learning continues to improve in both key stages.
- Leaders provide good opportunities for staff to develop their skills. The academy trust supports this well. Staff share their best practice and this is having a positive impact on standards.
- The outcomes of disadvantaged pupils are improving. Overall progress is good except for that of the middle-attaining disadvantaged pupils who do not always make as much progress as other pupils particularly in mathematics. However, the leadership of the school now ensures that the pupil premium funding is used in a targeted way. The school has a clear understanding of the barriers that these pupils face which affect their learning. Leaders can demonstrate the positive impact that the funding is having in helping to reduce these barriers for their pupils. Money is spent effectively to provide pupils with targeted support socially and emotionally.
- The additional government funding to promote sport and physical education is spent effectively. It is used successfully to provide training for staff and to increase pupils' participation in sports activities after school. Pupils also take part in a varying range of extra-curricular clubs, for example running, gymnastics and multi-skills clubs. There has been a substantial increase in participation in sporting activities over the last two years.
- Effective use is made of the special educational needs funding to ensure that the diverse needs of the pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities are met.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Senior leaders have clear aims for the

curriculum. The school offers a broad range of trips and visits that enrich pupils' experiences. For example, visiting music specialists, participation in an annual music showcase and visiting artists to support community arts projects all support the pupils' learning. Fundamental British values are strongly embedded within the curriculum and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is well promoted. The further development of the curriculum is the priority of the school.

- The vast majority of parents are pleased with the progress that their children make and the support they receive. Inspectors spoke to several parents on the playground who have high praise for the school. They are very pleased with the recent changes that new leaders have brought to the school.

Governance of the school

- Directors have a clear vision for the school. They are very clear about what needs to improve and have made a positive impact since they started to govern the school. They have been instrumental in the changes made, which have resulted in improvements to teaching, learning and outcomes.
- Directors have very effective systems in place to ensure that they bring appropriate balance of support and challenge to the school.
- Directors oversee the performance management of the acting principal of the school. They also keep a close eye on the progress and outcomes of the pupils throughout the school. They understand the need to improve pupils' outcomes in mathematics.
- Directors take their own training and development very seriously. They undertake skills audits, organise their own training days and work closely with governance consultants.
- Directors ensure that a tight rein is kept on the school's budget to ensure that school priorities are met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school works in partnership with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils are safe.
- The staff have a good understanding of safeguarding issues and procedures to follow should they be concerned about a pupil's welfare. Staff talk with confidence about the importance of safeguarding.
- Induction procedures for staff new to the school are effective.
- Those who have responsibility for safeguarding have completed training at the appropriate level. The acting principal is diligent in ensuring that there is someone with responsibility for safeguarding on the school premises at all times to deal with any safeguarding concerns.
- The school site is secure, and the identity of visitors to the school is closely checked.
- The single central record includes all requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Inspectors are in full agreement with the school's self-evaluation that the quality of teaching is good. This is supported by evidence from teaching throughout the school and looking at work in pupils' books from the current year and the last academic year.
- Teachers, for most of the time, especially in reading and writing, have high expectations of pupils. They ensure that lessons start straight away and move at a brisk pace so that no learning time is wasted. Most pupils work with positive attitudes and make good progress.
- Pupils are clear about how to improve their work.
- Questioning is used skilfully by staff throughout the school, which makes pupils think and listen closely and keeps them on their toes.
- Writing is taught effectively and pupils are keen writers. Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to write at length and for a wide range of purposes. Writing is developed well throughout the curriculum especially in humanities. For example, Year 6 pupils developed their writing skills by producing a written argument debating the dissolution of the monasteries during Henry VIII's reign.
- Pupils' presentation of work is good. The school is working hard to ensure that pupils' handwriting continues to improve.
- Pupils find reading enjoyable. Teachers are skilled at teaching reading and clearly focus on developing the pupils' key skills. For example, Year 6 pupils develop their prediction and inference skills. Most pupils read regularly at home and at school. Books are appropriately challenging for pupils' different abilities. Teachers keep careful records on the pupils' progress in reading, and parents are kept informed through home-school record books.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They use their knowledge well to plan pupils' learning. Leaders have employed additional specialist teachers at the school to ensure that good teaching and learning take place throughout the curriculum. As a result, pupils are developing good skills in music and physical education. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils read musical notation and created and composed their own rhythms, using technology to record them.
- Pupils are keen mathematicians. Teachers follow a structured approach to teaching mathematics. Pupils in all year groups have opportunities to apply their problem-solving skills regularly. Inspectors observed pupils working productively and purposely in mathematics lessons throughout the school. However, some work does not challenge pupils enough. Furthermore, some pupils told inspectors that they find their work too easy.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils spoke clearly and confidently about the four core Christian values that help them

lead their lives.

- Pupils feel safe, are proud of their school and enjoy attending. A pupil told the inspectors, 'The school works hard to prevent bullying from happening in the school.' Pupils also said that they like their worry box, which helps them share their concerns. Leaders take appropriate steps in keeping pupils safe online.
- The provision for pupils' physical well-being and development is a key strength of the school. Strong leadership ensures that a wide range of pupils take part in and know the importance of regular exercise. The school is proud of the dramatic rise in pupil participation in sporting activities.
- The school fosters a sense of community, with common inclusive values. As a result, pupils are caring, respectful and sensitive to the views and needs of others.
- The school promotes respect for others including those of other faiths, and pupils have a good understanding of fundamental British values. Through the conversations with inspectors, it was clear that pupils understand what respect and democracy mean and how they help them live their lives.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to exercise leadership responsibilities. The council elections have aided their understanding and appreciation of democracy and the way in which it applies to them and the wider community.
- The school gives pupils the opportunity to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, and the way in which they impact on people's lives. This leads to pupils' greater awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Standards of pupils' behaviour in the dining hall, in the playground and as pupils move around the school are good.
- Overall, similarly good standards of behaviour were observed in classrooms. However, on occasions, when learning does not engage pupils' interests, they can become fidgety.
- The vast majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire said that their children are happy, looked after and safe. A parent said that their children 'love coming to school, evidence enough that this is a happy safe learning environment for our children'. All parents who spoke to the inspectors said that their children are happy and enjoy school.
- Attendance is improving and is now broadly in line with the national average. The attendance of the disadvantaged pupils is increasing.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes are good, as the stable and improved teaching has had a positive impact on pupils' progress across the school. Inspectors could see how the school's timely interventions and good partnership working with the academy trust have had a positive

impact on pupils' outcomes in all year groups.

- Published information for 2016 highlighted that pupils' outcomes at key stage 1 were good. The number of pupils reaching the expected and higher standards were either in line with or above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's own data for 2017 shows that outcomes were low. Leaders acted quickly to address the dip in outcomes and, as a result, inspectors saw effective teaching and good progress in key stage 1. Senior leaders monitor pupils' progress with rigour. The school's own information and work in books show good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provisional results for 2017 suggest that outcomes at the end of key stage 2 were better than the published information for 2016. The number of pupils achieving a higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2017 was either in line with or above the previous national averages. Pupils' progress information is positive and much improved. In key stage 2, the number of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading and writing improved in 2017. However, the number of pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics is not high enough.
- The school's curriculum provides opportunities for the most able to apply their skills across the curriculum. Inspectors saw good examples of the writing of the most able pupils in history and science.
- The school monitors and checks the academic, social and emotional outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. Improvements can be seen in outcomes throughout the school, and the pupil premium is used well, which has had a positive impact on pupils' progress. However, the progress of the middle-attaining disadvantaged pupils is still below the national average, particularly in mathematics.
- As a result of timely interventions and good partnerships with the academy trust and outside agencies, the outcomes of pupils who have special education needs/or disabilities are improving throughout the school. The school's inclusion manager has a clear view of needs and the requirements of each pupil.
- Through training and the skilful deployment of specialist teachers, pupils make good progress in other parts of the curriculum. This is particularly the case in music, physical education and religious education.

Early years provision

Good

- Children come into the early years with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. From their different starting points, children make strong gains in their learning and are well prepared for their transition to Year 1. Children make good progress in Reception.
- Leaders are effective and have made a significant impact on improving the early years provision, and it is now a strength of the school. Leaders are well informed and have clear aims for further development.
- Consistently strong teaching over time and strong leadership ensure that all children get a good start to their education.

- Leaders work hard in the early years to ensure that the quality of the teaching continues to improve. Recently appointed staff receive targeted support and training. Staff work well in partnership with each other, sharing their expertise and resources.
- Children’s learning is good. Children’s attitudes to their learning are positive and they clearly enjoy school. They are happy, confident and busy and feel safe.
- Teaching is good. Staff provide activities that are imaginative and grasp the attention of the children. During the inspection, inspectors observed children’s enthusiasm and curiosity. They were particularly enthused about the leaves and conkers provided by staff to stimulate discussion.
- All learning areas are organised effectively so that children can select resources to work alone or with an adult. Outdoor learning is a priority, and pupils develop a whole range of skills outdoors. During the inspection, inspectors observed the children writing, counting and taking advantage of the opportunity to improve their physical development.
- Teaching assistants provide good levels of support when working with children during group activities. All staff use questioning effectively to encourage children to talk and to develop children’s language acquisition.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and there are no breaches of the statutory welfare requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	141641
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10036753

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	257
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Barend Anthon
Acting Principal	Laura Butcher
Telephone number	01942 703465
Website	http://www.abramsaintjohns.wigan.sch.uk/
Email address	enquiries@admin.abramsaintjohns.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. The school complies with the Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is slightly larger than the average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils receiving special educational needs support is below the national average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence with which to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. They observed learning in whole classes and in small groups. One observation took place jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with them about their work. They listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills. Inspectors talked to pupils about the books that they have enjoyed and those that they are currently reading. Inspectors took note of the displays around the school. Inspectors observed playtimes.
- Inspectors met formally with a group of directors and the chief executive officer of the academy trust.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the day. They took account of the 30 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors reviewed the contents of the school's website and scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Howard Bousfield, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Bevin	Ofsted Inspector
Kathleen McArthur	Ofsted Inspector

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