

West Didsbury CE Primary School

Central Road, West Didsbury, Manchester, Greater Manchester M20 4ZA

Inspection dates

6–7 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
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 dynamic leadership of the executive headteacher and assistant headteacher, along with the collective commitment of staff, governors, parents, carers and pupils, has created a school that parents describe as 'something special'.
- West Didsbury school wholeheartedly lives up to its motto, 'Belonging, Believing and Becoming'. The school's inclusive Christian values are at the heart of all it does.
- Governors know the school very well and make a valuable contribution to the school's development and improvement.
- Good-quality teaching and learning have resulted in the vast majority of pupils making good progress.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength. A high proportion of pupils meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is interesting and fun.
- Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics are in the early stages of influencing teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Leaders have fostered the professional development of staff, enabling them to grow into skilled practitioners who share a passion for learning.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities thrive. Barriers to learning are reduced, to ensure that they make outstanding progress from their starting points.
- Pupils that start school speaking English as an additional language are welcomed and immersed in school life. These pupils catch up quickly and make outstanding progress.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say that they 'can't wait to come again'. This is evident from their good attendance, which is above the national average.
- Behaviour is excellent and pupils conduct themselves impeccably around the school.
- Pupils typically think that school is 'brilliant'. They say they feel very safe.
- Leadership and teaching in the early years are effective. Children have a good start to school life.
- Although outcomes are good overall, not enough pupils, especially some middle-ability and the most able pupils, are working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Occasionally, the level of challenge offered by teachers prevents some pupils from thinking more deeply about their learning.
- Pupils sometimes lack confidence to work on their own in small groups supported by adults.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly for middle-ability pupils and the most able, so that a greater proportion are working at greater depth.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - offer greater challenge in the activities that they provide, so that pupils are encouraged to think more deeply about their learning
 - encourage pupils to develop the confidence to work with greater independence when they are working with adults.
- Further develop the role of subject leaders, so that leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics are able to influence teaching and pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- West Didsbury is a good school. This brand-new school is led well by the executive headteacher, ably supported by the dedicated assistant headteacher. Together with governors and staff, they are working effectively to translate their vision for excellence into reality. It is clear that the school is going from strength to strength.
- The school's Christian values and school motto, 'Belonging, Believing and Becoming', are embodied in everything that leaders and staff do. Leaders' promotion of inclusivity, equality and diversity has ensured that pupils are extremely caring, considerate, respectful and tolerant of each other and everyone they meet in school.
- Leaders are highly respected and have the full commitment of staff, parents and pupils. This contributes to the very positive motivation of all staff for continual improvement. Relationships between staff members are very strong. Teachers are unanimous in the pride that they feel working at West Didsbury. As a result, West Didsbury is a happy place to be for staff and pupils.
- Senior leaders know their school very well. The strengths of the school and areas for improvement are identified in the self-evaluation document and the school development plan. These are detailed and accurate, meaning that the inspection findings came as no surprise to leaders and governors.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is thorough and accurate. Senior leaders are adept at identifying strengths in teaching and fostering the individual skills and talents of individual members of staff. This has led to consistently good teaching over time, which in turn has resulted in pupils' good achievement.
- Leaders are particularly skilled in ensuring that newly qualified teachers (NQTs) are well supported as they begin their teaching career. The support that NQTs receive helps to lay solid foundations for their future success as effective practitioners.
- Senior leaders have developed a clear, straightforward system to assess pupils' achievement and to check on their progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders and governors review this information regularly. They also use this information to discuss pupils' learning with teachers and to plan opportunities to help pupils to catch up if needed.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to reduce any barriers to learning that may be experienced by disadvantaged pupils. The progress of pupils supported by this funding is monitored closely. The impact of pupil premium funding is evaluated carefully by the executive headteacher and governors. The use of this funding enables disadvantaged pupils to be successful, to make similar progress to other pupils and to be part of everything the school has to offer.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding is also used well. Teachers have had additional training on delivering aspects of PE and pupils have benefited from opportunities to be involved in a wide range of sporting activities both within the school day and after school.

- The leadership and organisation of SEN provision are excellent and funding is used very effectively. Teachers identify pupils' needs swiftly. Teachers also use high-quality resources, ensuring that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities thrive in their learning and in their personal and social development.
- The school offers an interesting and fun curriculum. It engages pupils and contributes to their enjoyment of learning. However, the size of the school has until recently limited the allocation of subject leadership roles. Consequently, new leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics have not had the chance to check on the teaching in their subject or to monitor the progress that pupils' make. Nonetheless, the subject leaders that are in post are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility. They benefit from regular opportunities to meet with colleagues from their sister school and other local schools and they regularly participate in professional training. As a result, they are beginning to make a contribution to school improvement in their area of responsibility.
- The strong promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means that the school is a calm and very considerate environment where pupils mix happily together. Through assemblies and the curriculum, pupils learn about the wider community, respecting people from different backgrounds and with different characteristics. Pupils are actively involved in the school community and they promote the school's values well. For example, staff, pupils and their families enjoyed enormously 'the great get together' event in memory of Jo Cox MP. It was such a heart-warming and affirming school community event that leaders intend to hold a similar occasion every year.
- As founder members of the multi-academy trust that they belong to, leaders and teachers draw support and share practice effectively with staff from their sister schools. Colleagues support each other in a range of areas, for example by working together to develop their teaching practice and to check the accuracy of their assessments of pupils' attainment.
- The school has a good relationship with the local authority. The school's leaders are well respected within the local authority and play a full part within a network of local schools.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly effective and make an important contribution to the school's growth and development and to pupils' rising attainment in the school. Some governors have been instrumental in the conception and setting up of the school.
- Governors know their school extremely well and are confident and skilled to ask challenging questions. The attributes of the members of the governing body have been used very well to ensure that their expertise benefits the school. Governors are confidently involved in all aspects of the school's development and the monitoring of its improvement.
- Governors have a good understanding of performance management procedures. They hold teachers and leaders to account and also ensure that the management of teachers' pay is effective.

- Governors are conscientious and take part in all relevant training on good governance practice and understanding the school's assessment information. As a result, governors have good levels of understanding about the progress that pupils are making. They make sure that the pupil premium and the PE and sport grants are spent effectively and make a difference to pupils' achievement and enjoyment of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose.
- Leaders make sure that pupils have a safe and secure environment by promoting the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding arrangements are in place, and records are appropriate and kept securely. Staff and governors undertake regular and appropriate training, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism.
- Safeguarding is a high priority in the school, as is the care and welfare of vulnerable pupils and families. Leaders are persistent in following up cases where the school is concerned for a pupil's welfare. Effective relationships with other agencies and with parents ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.
- Pupils spoken to were unanimous in their view that they felt safe in school and knew how to keep themselves safe personally and online. Pupils feel very confident that adults will help them if needed. The overwhelming majority of parents feel that the school keeps their children safe and well looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Leaders and staff have worked extremely hard to establish effective approaches to teaching, learning and assessment in this new school. In a relatively short period of time, leaders have established high expectations and a consistent approach to teaching and learning. As a result, the vast majority of pupils make good progress.
- The teaching at West Didsbury is characterised by friendly, warm relationships between staff and pupils. Staff model expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils rise to this by working hard and behaving well. They say that they enjoy their lessons. Pupils like coming to school particularly because they 'like their teachers' and because teachers help 'make learning fun'. When they struggle, pupils say that adults will always help them to understand.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge. They explain new ideas clearly and simply, relating difficult concepts to prior learning or to the pupils' own experiences. Adults ask questions that draw out pupils' learning. Teachers are quick to tackle any misconceptions that pupils may have in their learning. Pupils are offered good-quality resources to support their learning and to make activities interesting.
- Learning activities are often linked to other curriculum areas and topics, which gives pupils a sense of purpose and added interest. However, in adult-supported group

activities, pupils are sometimes hesitant to work independently. They rely too much on teachers or teaching assistants to guide them in their learning, rather than being confident in their own ability.

- Teachers offer pupils different levels of challenge. However, this has varied success. Sometimes, the challenge provided by teachers does not extend pupils' knowledge or enable them to think more deeply about what is being taught. As a result, some pupils are not learning as much as they could. This is particularly the case for some of the middle-ability and most-able pupils.
- A very effective range of learning opportunities are available to help those pupils who struggle with their learning. A good example of this is the provision and support for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Every effort is made by adults and pupils to settle new arrivals into the school as quickly as possible. A pupil who is new to English is paired with a peer 'buddy' who looks after them and acts as a learning role model as well as a friend. Pupils are quickly assessed. An extremely effective programme of learning support is put in place to help them catch up quickly. As a result, these pupils make outstanding progress.
- For those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, the support that they are offered is broad, clearly targeted and of an excellent quality. Teachers plan additional support very well, resulting in many of the pupils being able to work at the same level as their peers. Pupils that are not able to do this still make outstanding progress from their starting points.
- The development of pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills is a high priority in the school. Reading texts are used very effectively in each class to create a range of interesting and stimulating activities, while fostering an interest in reading.
- The teaching of phonics is strong and gives pupils the skills to read unfamiliar words. Pupils who struggle with reading have good support in practising their skills and are proud of the progress they make.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, or spoke to the inspectors in the playground felt that their children were well taught. Most felt that the quality of information given to them about their children's learning was valuable and of a good quality. Many praised the quality and regularity of communication that they have with school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The importance placed on pupils' personal development and welfare is central to the work of leaders and staff. It is underpinned by the school's strong Christian ethos and values. Staff and governors are passionate about their responsibility to ensure that the school provides a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment in which pupils thrive.
- The school offers an excellent personal, social, emotional and health curriculum that is woven into all that the school does. A very high profile is given to equipping pupils with valuable skills that promote the value and importance of well-being, respect, self-

esteem and being responsible and well-balanced citizens. There is a palpable sense of pride about belonging to the school. For example, pupils talked about their school being 'like a family' and that West Didsbury was 'their school' because 'we have been here since it started'. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to the immediate and wider local community, for example through activities such as decorating a giant bee that symbolises unity and spirit following the bombing at the Manchester Arena.

- Staff treat pupils with the utmost consideration and ensure that everyone feels welcome and valued. Adults constantly model respectful and caring behaviour in lessons, around school and in the way that they engage with pupils. As a result, pupils behave similarly and are thoughtful and compassionate citizens.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who spoke to the inspectors had nothing but praise for the school and the work of the staff. Parents said that their children were happy and cared for. A number of parents were keen to say that their children 'loved' school and could not wait to come each morning. They put this down to the staff's skills at nurturing and building confidence, but also say staff go 'above and beyond' for the children.
- Most of the pupils throughout key stage 1 are confident learners and are happy to talk about their learning. Pupils told inspectors how proud they were of their school and how they were well looked after by adults.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection were very clear about what 'unkind' behaviour was and said that incidents of this were very rare. Pupils were confident that teachers dealt with any unfriendly or negative language towards pupils quickly. All parents who spoke to the inspector said that the school deals appropriately with inappropriate behaviour and bullying and that it was very rare. Pupils spoken to understood what bullying was, but confirmed that bullying was unusual. They felt that adults dealt with any situations quickly. They concluded by saying that there were 'no bullies in the school'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils conduct themselves impeccably around school. They relish fun and are spirited in their approach to school life, but they are also clear about their boundaries. They are extremely polite and well mannered. Staff and pupils know each other very well and consider themselves to be part of a close school family.
- There is a very productive atmosphere around the school. Pupils are encouraged to work without the constant attention of an adult. They do this extremely well in independent activities, but slightly less so when a teacher is close at hand in supported group activities. Nonetheless, pupils are attentive and eager to participate in lessons, visibly enjoying activities. They view learning as very important to them, valuing it highly, which shows in their excellent attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are fully aware of how to behave and the consequences of poor behaviour. They say that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are very infrequent, dealt with quickly by teachers and responded to by pupils appropriately. Pupils are responsive and highly respectful to adults and to each other.

- Pupils enjoy school, as demonstrated by their high level of attendance, currently above that of other pupils nationally. The systems for monitoring pupils' absence are meticulous and effective. Good attendance is rewarded and has a high profile in the school. Leaders quickly spot any pupil at risk of becoming persistently absent. Appropriate support ensures that these pupils get back on track swiftly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the national screening check for phonics at the end of Year 1 is above the national average. This indicates considerable improvement for the 2016 cohort of pupils whose achievement in reading was low at the end of their Reception year. Phonics development is a very prominent feature of both early years and key stage 1 classes. It is taught well, with every opportunity taken to practise phonics skills throughout the day and through a range of different subjects.
- The school is participating in the end of key stage 1 national tests and assessments for the first time this year. The school's own data indicates that pupils currently at the school are achieving well. Different groups of pupils are making good progress and a high proportion are working at the standards expected by the school in reading, writing and mathematics. This is especially noteworthy, considering that only half of the current Year 2 began key stage 1 with a good level of development.
- School data indicates that leaders and teachers have been less effective in ensuring a greater proportion of pupils are working at greater depth. At the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils on track to achieve greater depth is below the 2017 national averages. This is mirrored in Year 1, with very few pupils currently on track to exceed their age-related expectations in reading, writing or mathematics.
- The school has a small number of pupils identified as eligible for the pupil premium funding. The school's achievement information indicates that these pupils are making good progress and achieving as well as their peers in school.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make outstanding progress from their starting points. This is because teachers and teaching assistants know pupils extremely well, offer excellent support and make sure that pupils succeed in all aspects of their learning.

Early years provision

Good

- Many children start school with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. Some children who join the school are in the early stages of speaking English as an additional language. By the time children leave the early years, the vast majority make good progress. The proportion of children who gain a good level of development by the end of Reception is above average. Consequently, children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Adults have high expectations of the children and they share a desire to make sure that children thrive, enjoy their learning and get the best possible start to school life. Leaders are passionate about creating strong foundations on which the children at West Didsbury can build for future success.

- Leadership of the early years is strong. There is a clear view about the strengths and weaknesses of the early years. The relatively newly formed team has a good understanding of strengths and they have identified accurate priorities for future improvement.
- There is a focus on team work, sharing good practice and good quality development of the staff. This has ensured that adults are skilled and confident practitioners and are offering good learning opportunities for children.
- The two Reception classes are well organised to create a rich and varied learning environment for all children. Adults offer many opportunities which encourage children to do things for themselves. Where adults join in with children's play, they use these opportunities well to teach skills and model good learning habits. For example, a group of children used the tubing from their water play imaginatively to make a bridge so that their friends could ride their scooters underneath. Adults encouraged children to think through their plans and skilfully enabled them to find possible solutions, to try them out and then to talk about alternatives.
- Children have plenty of opportunities to explore outdoors using a range of equipment, including natural resources. This encourages them to build, create and try out their ideas. Activities are fun, capture the children's imagination and allow them to practise their skills. As a result, whatever their ability, they are absorbed in their learning. For example, a group of children who speak English as an additional language were immersed in talking about their trucks excavating a sandy site. The children talked with each other excitedly. They collected objects from other outdoor activities to create obstacles and hazards for their trucks to negotiate.
- Leaders use additional funding well to provide resources and support for disadvantaged children. They have a good understanding of the impact that this has on children's learning. Children make similarly good progress to that made by other children nationally and achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is good. Routines are well established and there is a high level of expectation of what children will achieve. Adults demonstrate good subject knowledge and there is a strong consistency of approach and manner from all adults.
- The importance placed on reading, writing and mathematical skills is very evident, with regular chances for children to write, practise their letters and sounds and use number in all areas of the classroom as well as in the outside area. The development of language, including speaking and building self-confidence, is also a high priority because of the high proportion of children who speak English as an additional language. As a result, many children in Reception feel confident and eager to say hello to visitors and chat about what they are doing and what they are proud of. Adults engage with children extremely well. They are skilled at asking questions to draw out children's understanding, to encourage them to talk and to help them to feel self-assured.
- The way adults assess and track children's learning is effective. Adults gather information well to plan a curriculum for children that is interesting and lively.
- Safeguarding is effective. Risk assessments are thorough and the classrooms are safe environments for children.

- The strong emphasis on creating a caring and nurturing environment that is ever-present throughout the rest of the school is equally evident in early years. Relationships that adults have with children and children have with each other are very strong. Children's behaviour is exemplary. They play and learn together extremely well and are inquisitive, curious and highly motivated to learn.
- Staff also have very positive relationships with parents. Parents describe the adults in early years as 'friendly and approachable'. Comments such as 'my child is happy and thriving' are typical. Parents particularly appreciate how well their children are welcomed into school when they start in the early years provision. Staff 'go the extra mile' to help children settle and make a good start to their school careers.

School details

Unique reference number	141967
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10046605

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Paul Blackburn
Executive headteacher	Matt Whitehead
Telephone number	0161 448 1611
Website	www.westdidsburyceprimary.co.uk
Email address	office@westdidsburyceprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- West Didsbury CofE Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The school is an academy free school. It opened in September 2015. The school is one of three schools that are part of The St. James and Emmanuel Academy Trust. The other two schools in the multi-academy trust are Didsbury CofE Primary School and St. Wilfrid's CofE Primary School.
- There are currently 170 pupils on roll. Leaders took the decision to grow the school from the Reception classes upwards. At the time of the inspection, the oldest pupils were in Year 2. When the school is full it will cater for approximately 420 pupils from Reception to Year 6.
- 10 of the 17 ethnic groups are represented in the school, the largest being White British and Asian or Asian British Pakistani.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. They observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also observed pupils at playtime and during lunchtimes.
- The inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books, including the books of children in the early years.
- An inspector listened to a small number of pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the assistant headteacher, who was also the early years leader, and the special educational needs coordinator. They also met with those responsible for safeguarding and attendance and a group of middle leaders.
- The inspector met with four members of the local governing body, including the chair. Two of these governors also represented The St. James and Emmanuel Academy Trust. A telephone call was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 21 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 69 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with an inspector. Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils at playtimes and around the school.
- Inspectors took account of 87 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire Parent View and talked briefly with a number of parents before school.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: information on pupils' attainment and progress; the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan; records of checks on the quality of teaching; and the school's curriculum planning documents. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Gill Burrow

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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