

Inspection of a good school: St Thomas' CofE Primary School, Leigh

Astley Street, Leigh, Lancashire WN7 2AS

Inspection dates:

19–20 November 2019

Outcome

St Thomas' CofE Primary School, Leigh continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils to succeed. They have created an environment where pupils feel happy and safe. Pupils enjoy coming to the school. The school's Christian ethos shines through in the way that pupils and staff care for each other. Pupils try to follow the school's values of 'family, fellowship and forgiveness' with the decisions that they make. Parents and carers speak highly of the school and would recommend it to others.

Pupils work hard in lessons. Pupils said that teachers make learning interesting. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They conduct themselves well around the school. Pupils said that behaviour is good, and that bullying is rare. If bullying does happen, it is resolved quickly.

Pupils hold positions of responsibility in the school as members of committees and as 'Value Ambassadors'. They talk confidently about the many things that they can do at the school. For example, pupils enjoy trips linked to their learning and the wide variety of clubs and activities that they can participate in.

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

Leaders and staff have worked together to design a curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. This curriculum sparks pupils' interest about the world around them from Reception through to Year 6. Pupils are eager to learn. Disruption in lessons is rare. Leaders have identified what pupils need to know by the end of each year group. The curriculum plans set out the order that knowledge is to be taught. Training for teachers enables them to deliver the curriculum effectively. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, achieve well. For the past few years, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has matched that of other Year 6 pupils in the country.

The teaching of reading has the highest priority in the school. Leaders provide guidance

for parents so that they know how to help their children when reading with them at home. Children begin to learn phonics as soon as they join the school in Reception. The books they read match the sounds that they are learning. Pupils who fall behind are given the help that they need to catch up. Almost all pupils reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. They read with fluency and understanding.

Pupils' increasing vocabulary enables them to access a range of books that support their learning in a broad range of subjects. Leaders foster a love of reading. Pupils in Year 6 talked with enthusiasm about their favourite authors and the wide selection of books in the school library. They especially enjoy the chance to read and relax, sometimes with a cup of hot chocolate. They are looking forward to the visit from a children's author.

Pupils' learning in writing builds on their knowledge and understanding of vocabulary, grammar and punctuation each year. Pupils use their knowledge well when writing in different styles and for different purposes. For example, in Reception, children used their phonic knowledge to write a list of the ingredients in the vegetable soup that they made. Older pupils wrote good-quality persuasive letters to local residents explaining the importance of recycling.

In most subjects, teachers check what pupils know and remember. Teachers' planning builds on pupils' prior knowledge. For example, in history, pupils in Year 3 explained how they used their skills to research the evidence left behind by Stone-Age people to understand what life was like in ancient Britain. Pupils in Year 5 talked confidently about how the history they learned in Year 2 helped them to understand what living conditions were like in London in the past, to help them understand more about their current studies on Tudor monarchs. However, the way teachers check what pupils know and remember is not fully embedded in all subjects.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Leaders provide a breadth of experiences and opportunities for pupils. There are a range of clubs at lunchtime and after school, including 'sit and knit', choir and cookery. Pupils also enjoy the many sports clubs that they can join. Staff plan trips and visits to enhance pupils' learning, including to places of worship and field trips when studying habitats in science.

Governors are proud to be part of this happy school. They use their experience, knowledge and skills well to support staff. They hold leaders to account to ensure that the good quality of education is maintained for all pupils, including pupils with SEND.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Checks are in place to ensure that adults in the school are suitable to work with pupils. Detailed records relating to safeguarding are well maintained. Staff are vigilant. The training that they receive enables them to recognise the signs of potential risk. They understand the procedures to follow should they have concerns. Leaders work together with other agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families get the timely support they need. Leaders ensure that pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in

a variety of situations, including when they are using the internet and social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not check what children know and remember. As a result, teachers' planning does not identify what pupils need to learn next. Leaders need to ensure that teachers take greater account of what pupils already know when planning learning, so that pupils can know more and remember more.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged St Thomas' CofE Primary School, Leigh to be good in June 2015.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	106448
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10087751
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Vikki Semple
Headteacher	James Marsh
Website	http://www.leighsaintthomas.wigan.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	16–17 June

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school had its most recent section 48 inspection, undertaken by the Diocese of Manchester, in 2018.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I spoke with pupils about their work and school life. I spoke with the chair of governors, three members of the governing body, the headteacher, subject leaders and members of staff. I also spoke with a representative from the local authority by telephone.
- I considered the 20 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, and the 36 responses from the online staff survey. There were also 65 responses to the pupils’ survey.
- During the inspection, I reviewed a range of documentation including curriculum plans and plans for further school improvement. I also scrutinised a range of documentation

relating to safeguarding.

- I considered some subjects in greater detail. These were reading, writing and history. I held discussions with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, talked with teachers and talked with pupils about their learning. I also listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Amanda Stringer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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