

Inspection of a good school: St James' Church of England Primary School, Clitheroe

Greenacre Street, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 1ED

Inspection dates:

10–11 December 2019

Outcome

St James' Church of England Primary School, Clitheroe continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where everyone feels valued. Leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils. Pupils behave well. They are proud to be on the 'St James' journey'. Everyone understands that the 'journey' is about learning, behaving well and being respectful of others.

Pupils' learning is interesting and varied. Pupils appreciate the way in which teachers plan visits to enhance their learning. For example, younger pupils visited the zoo as part of their science topic and older pupils visited a Roman museum during their history topic. Pupils talked positively about the number of clubs that they can join, for instance choir, science club, dance club and coding club.

Pupils said that they feel safe. They said that bullying is rare and, if does occur, they are confident that it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by adults.

The school has very close links with the local community. Pupils regularly raise money for local charities and take part in community events. Pupils appreciate that everyone is different. They make sure that everyone is welcome at St James'.

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

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. Leaders ensure that pupils have access to an interesting and ambitious curriculum. Teachers meticulously plan each topic to ensure that pupils cover the full range of national curriculum subjects in a well-ordered manner. Teachers do this well, overcoming the challenges of changing the way classes are organised each year.

The teaching of reading is a high priority for the school. There is a well-sequenced phonics programme in the Reception class and in Year 1. However, there is not always a

sense of urgency about how quickly phonics teaching is introduced at the start of the academic year for the children in the early years. Teachers receive regular training. This means that phonics teaching is engaging and helps pupils to become successful readers. If pupils fall behind, they receive the support they need to help them catch up quickly. Older pupils enjoy reading. They speak with enthusiasm about the books they share together in class. They are able to discuss their favourite books and authors.

The mathematics curriculum is clearly sequenced. Teachers' planning helps pupils to understand and practise new concepts. Pupils can talk with confidence about the mathematics knowledge that they have learned. For example, Year 2 pupils talked about their understanding of time and Year 6 pupils discussed how to change a fraction to a decimal number.

Leaders have made sure that teachers have the subject knowledge to teach the full range of subjects in the ambitious curriculum. Pupils enjoy their learning. They are gaining the knowledge and skills that leaders have set out in the curriculum plans. Pupils can remember and discuss what they have learned in detail. For example, older pupils could discuss aspects of an ancient civilisation and others showed they understood the concept of democracy. However, at times, the work in pupils' books does not always reflect the depth of their understanding in each subject.

The curriculum in the early years begins by focusing on helping children to become independent and resilient learners. Children build towers with blocks and can count confidently to compare which model is taller or shorter. Pupils learn about the world and can talk about the season of Christmas. Parents and carers appreciate the start that their children receive in the Reception class. A comment from one parent typifies the views of others: 'I couldn't be prouder to be part of this school family.'

Governors are very committed to the school. They make sure that they ask challenging questions, which allows them to have a good understanding of the school's effectiveness. Teachers are appreciative of leaders' efforts to reduce the workload of staff. They said that leaders listen to their views and are supportive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding has a high priority. Staff are well trained and receive regular updates. They know what to do and who to talk to if they are worried about a pupil. Leaders, including governors, ensure that the systems for recruiting new staff are robust. All the appropriate checks are carried out on staff.

Teachers know families well and relationships are strong. Leaders work closely with a wide range of professionals to make sure that vulnerable families get the help and support that they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The teaching of phonics is well planned and delivered. However, children in the early years do not always get started on the phonics programme quickly enough. Leaders should ensure that phonics is taught from the start of the Reception Year to ensure that children get the very best start in developing their early reading skills.

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 the school to be good on 30 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	119419
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10087776
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	377
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of the governing body	Mark Clayton
Headteacher	Fiona Pattison
Website	www.stjames-clitheroe.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 June 2015

Information about this school

- Pupils are taught in a mixture of single and mixed-age classes.
- The school operates in two buildings across a large site.
- The most recent section 48 inspection took place in October 2016.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, teachers and members of the governing body. I also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- I talked with pupils in meetings and around school. I listened to pupils read.
- I spoke informally to parents on the playground. I considered 61 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the free-text responses. There were no responses to the pupils' questionnaire.
- I met with groups of teachers and support staff to discuss their experiences of working at the school, including their workload. I considered the responses of 17 staff to the Ofsted survey.
- I reviewed a range of documentation about the school. This included information about

safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff and documents related to support for pupils.

- As part of the inspection, I considered how phonics and reading are taught. I also considered how mathematics and history are taught. I visited lessons with leaders and looked at pupils' work. I met with some pupils from the lesson visits to discuss their learning. I discussed the curriculum in these subjects with teachers and leaders.

Inspection team

Emma Jackson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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