

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

Devonport Way, Chorley, Lancashire PR6 0TE

Inspection dates:

14–15 January 2020

Outcome

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

There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils benefit from an exciting and engaging curriculum. They attend school regularly because they love learning. Pupils told me that they always feel safe in school and that behaviour is usually good. They also said that on the rare occasions that bullying happens, it is dealt with immediately. Most parents and carers describe St James' as a school where their children are well cared for by dedicated and thoughtful staff.

Staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. This inspires pupils to be the best that they can be and supports their strong achievement in a wide range of subjects.

Staff help pupils to become resilient and confident learners. They are excellent ambassadors for the school. Pupils are highly competitive and many excel in football, netball, gymnastics and swimming. They are also caring and active citizens, who live up to the school's Christian values. Pupils raise money for many good causes. Members of the school choir are proud to perform in the local community.

Pupils of all ages embrace technology and computing. They are creative, and play different musical instruments including the glockenspiel, recorder, xylophone and saxophone. Pupils enjoy visits to museums, theatres and local places of interest.

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

School leaders have created an ambitious and carefully planned curriculum, with Christian values and technology at its core. Leaders want every pupil to enjoy learning, find their strengths and achieve highly. St James' curriculum brings learning to life through memorable experiences such as educational visits. The curriculum also gives pupils the knowledge and skills that they need for the next stage of their learning.

Children start learning phonics soon after they start school. Over the last few years, nearly all pupils have been successful in reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Many pupils develop into fluent readers who have good comprehension skills. They are rightly proud of their reading and writing achievements. However, across key stage 2, pupils' progress in reading is not quite as strong as it is in writing and mathematics. Some pupils do not read widely enough and have a limited appreciation of the work of different authors and poets.

At the end of Year 6 in 2019, pupils achieved well in mathematics. Teachers make mathematics learning interesting. Their enthusiasm for the subject generates excitement among pupils. Lessons are built on what pupils know and understand. Teachers ensure that ample opportunities are provided for pupils to revise and refine their calculation skills. The mathematics knowledge and skills that pupils develop help them to solve complex problems in other subjects such as science and computing.

The early years curriculum is well planned and ambitious. In the Reception class, children are skilled at using technology. Many understand basic computing and know that an ordered set of instructions in a code is called an algorithm. Children love story time. They listen to stories and poems closely, joining in with actions and chorus lines. They love talking about books and stories. This was seen when children listened to the story of the Little Red Hen. At the end of the story, they were amazed when their teacher showed them a loaf like the one the hen had baked. They thoroughly enjoyed discussing how the loaf should be shared.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from the same engaging curriculum as their peers and they take a full part in after-school activities. The special educational needs coordinator works closely with teachers and teaching assistants, giving them good advice on how they can help pupils succeed in their learning.

Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They love to be challenged in lessons and can recall many details about their previous learning. Leaders have worked successfully to enhance pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to pursue their interests. They carry out various roles at the school such as council members, playleaders, play buddies and eco leaders. Pupils enjoy the many after-school clubs that staff run. These include gardening, photography, knitting, judo, dance and entomology.

Staff morale is high. Staff told me that they feel privileged to work at the school and that they enjoy sharing their expertise with their peers and teachers in other schools. Staff are highly motivated. They work hard for the benefit of pupils. Staff told me that leaders are very aware of their workload, mental health and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, staff and governors are highly vigilant when it comes to pupils' welfare. They are trained to a high standard and ensure that effective systems are in place for passing on and recording safeguarding concerns.

Staff know exactly what to do if they are concerned about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Leaders make appropriate checks on all adults who work in the school. Teachers help pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' progress in reading by the end of key stage 2 is not as strong as it is in writing and mathematics. Some pupils in key stage 2 do not develop a love of reading. They do not read regularly enough and have limited experience of different types of books. Staff need to promote reading more effectively. They also need to ensure that the reading curriculum introduces older pupils to a wider range of different authors, poets and book types.

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 second section 8 inspection since we judged Chorley St James' Church of England Primary School to be good on 10–11 October 2011.

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 the school and 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

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| Unique reference number | 119467 |
| Local authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 10122137 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 236 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Neville Norcross |
| Headteacher | Claire Greenway |
| Website | www.st-james-chorley.lancs.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 15 June 2016 |

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the outdoor learning and play area for children in the early years has been remodelled.
- Chorley St James' is a Church of England school. Its last section 48 inspection took place in March 2017.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and senior leaders responsible for the curriculum. I met with the special educational needs coordinator and staff responsible for safeguarding and pupils' welfare. I also met with the family support worker.
- I met with six governors, including the chair of the governing body. I held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- I took account of the 39 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also considered responses to the questionnaires completed by 22 members of staff and 171 pupils.

- I focused deeply on reading, mathematics and computing. For each subject, I met with the subject leaders and teachers. I visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning.
- I met with pupils, leaders and staff to talk about pupils' safety, personal development and behaviour. I checked the school's records of the suitability of staff to work with children. I also talked with parents about matters relating to safety and scrutinised the school's safeguarding policy and related documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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