

Inspection of a good school: Atherton St George's CofE Primary School

Derby Street, Atherton, Manchester M46 0HJ

Inspection dates:

5–6 March 2020

Outcome

Atherton St George's CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who I spoke with told me that St George's is a really happy school. They said that this is because they get to learn lots of new things. Pupils know staff want and expect them to do well. They work hard and take pride in their work.

Pupils' behaviour is good. Lessons are calm and orderly. Pupils play well together at playtime. Mutual respect is evident between pupils and staff. Pupils are tolerant and respectful of each other. Bullying incidents are rare. When it does occur, pupils are confident that staff will sort things out quickly. Pupils told me that they feel safe. They take on a range of responsibilities within school, such as a lunchtime helper.

Pupils enjoy studying a wide range of curriculum topics. They said that learning is exciting. Pupils learn about a range of cultures, traditions and communities. They enjoy a varied range of trips that support their learning. Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They are keen to achieve well. However, they do not achieve as well as they are capable of in some areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics and phonics.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that the pupils enjoy. As part of World Book Day pupils were inspired to learn about the impact of influential women on the way we live today. They were eager to talk about the work of Greta Thunberg, Florence Nightingale and Frida Kahlo. Curriculum plans are in place for all subjects. In subjects such as science, history and Spanish plans are delivered effectively by teachers. As a result, pupils build specific knowledge and skills across these subjects. However, curriculum plans for subjects such as art and design, design and technology and geography are not followed precisely by teachers. In addition, the monitoring arrangements for these subjects are in the early stages of development. As a result, pupils do not achieve well in these subjects.

Pupils enjoy reading and appreciate the range of books that their teachers provide for them. In the early years, children have many opportunities to develop and extend their vocabulary. There are detailed plans in place for the teaching of phonics. However, some staff do not make effective use of assessment to plan activities that build on what pupils already know and can do. This results in some pupils not doing as well as they are capable of in the Year 1 phonics screening check and in developing early reading skills. Published data shows that in 2019 the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check was significantly below the national average.

At key stage 2, teachers use good-quality texts in daily reading lessons. Pupils enjoy listening to stories that adults read to them. They enjoy reading books that support their learning across a range of curriculum subjects. Pupils are becoming more confident in answering questions about texts that involve deduction and inference.

Children develop their mathematical skills as soon as they start in the early years. Teachers, across the school, promote the accurate use of mathematical vocabulary. However, they do not always systematically check pupils' understanding of key skills and knowledge. Pupils lack knowledge of arithmetic. This hinders their ability to solve mathematical problems. As a result, not all pupils achieve to the best of their ability in mathematics.

The leader with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that support provided for this group of pupils is appropriate. Pupils with complex emotional needs have their needs met well. This is helping these pupils to achieve as well as their peers.

Pupils behave well and this has a positive impact on their learning. They benefit enormously from the wide range of additional activities provided for them. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the extra opportunities they enjoy, such as residential and educational visits. Pupils have many additional responsibilities. Older pupils take on roles as playground buddies and members of the eco and school council committees. Staff support pupils' social and emotional needs well. Pupils benefit from talking with members of the pastoral team about how to manage their feelings. They could tell me about different faiths and have a positive understanding of other cultures. All of this helps to develop pupils' wider interests and to build their character.

Staff appreciate the opportunity to work with colleagues in different schools in the trust. Staff feel valued. They told me that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being.

In discussion with the headteacher, we agreed that the implementation of some subjects in the wider curriculum, including mathematics and phonics, may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All necessary checks are made on adults working at the school. Regular training means that staff are alert to signs that a pupil's welfare is at risk. Governors receive appropriate safeguarding reports.

All staff work together to make sure that keeping pupils safe is at the core of what they do. Leaders act promptly when any concerns are raised about a pupil's welfare. They know the needs of the most vulnerable pupils and their families. This means they can provide the right support to make sure these pupils get the help they need.

The curriculum incorporates plentiful opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum plans in mathematics sequence learning effectively. However, these plans are not implemented well enough across all classes and year groups to ensure that pupils learn and remember as well as they should. There has been a decline in pupils' attainment in mathematics in key stage 2. Leaders should ensure that all staff implement the curriculum so that all pupils develop, practise and refine their knowledge and skills. This should ensure that pupils have the effective arithmetic knowledge to confidently tackle problems and reasoning questions.
- Leaders recognise that the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is below average. In view of this, leaders and teachers have adopted a more focused approach to the planning and delivering of the phonics programme. However, there remain inconsistencies in how well the new approach is used by adults. Leaders need to work with teachers to ensure that the implementation of the phonics programme is more effective. They need to ensure that assessments are carried out so that teachers plan the curriculum to meet the specific needs of the children. Leaders need to ensure that an increased number of pupils achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Curriculum plans in some subjects, such as art and design, geography, and design and technology, are not delivered effectively. As a result, pupils do not achieve well in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum plans are successfully implemented, drawing on the effective practice that is already in place in other subjects. Leaders need to ensure that the monitoring arrangements are of the same good quality as evident in other areas of the curriculum, such as science and history.

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 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 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 predecessor school, Atherton St George's CofE Primary School, to be good on 8–9 October 2014.

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

Unique reference number	144371
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10122050
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	365
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrea Atherton
Headteacher	Lisa Boardman
Website	www.saintgeorges.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in April 2017.

Information about this inspection

- I held meetings with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- I held meetings with teachers, support staff and subject leaders. I met with four members of the trust board, including the chief executive officer.
- I spoke to pupils about behaviour and observed behaviour around the school and in lessons.
- I reviewed the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of trust board meetings and information on the school's website. I examined records in relation to safeguarding.
- I considered the 48 parent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and read all the free-text responses. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day.
- I took account of the 26 responses to the Ofsted staff online questionnaire.

- I carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. During the deep dives I met with subject leaders and visited lessons. I also spoke with teachers and pupils. I looked at examples of pupils' work and listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Andrew Morley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020