

Inspection of a good school: St James' Catholic Primary School

Cheriton Close, Off Underwood Road, Hattersley, Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 3DQ

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 June 2021

Outcome

St James' Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St James' is a happy, caring and supportive place to be. Pupils value the strong relationships that they form with staff. They are glad to be back with their friends following the period when the school was only open to some children due to COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions in the spring term.

Pupils behave well in school. They understand what bullying is. If this occurs, pupils know that their teachers will help them and stop it happening. Pupils feel safe. This is because they know that staff always have time to listen to them.

Pupils engage in a wide range of clubs and educational visits. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can join the school's brass band. This helps to improve pupils' independence, social skills and self-confidence.

Pupils learn to be respectful and welcoming. They have a good understanding of diversity. Pupils and staff understand and put into practice the mission statement, 'Together we are learning to follow Jesus'.

Governors and staff share leaders' high ambitions for all pupils. Leaders have improved both the reading and mathematics curriculums. Pupils now achieve well in these subjects.

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

Leaders, staff and governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. In 2019, leaders recognised the need to improve pupils' achievement, particularly in phonics. The local authority and the diocese have worked in partnership with leaders to support the improvements needed.

A broad and ambitious curriculum is in place and teachers deliver this well in many subjects. Pupils, including those with SEND, study all subjects and enjoy their learning. Leaders and governors have completed an evaluation of nearly all subject curriculums to

identify what is working well and how they can be developed even further. However, not all leaders have the knowledge and skills to improve their subjects. This limits their ability to check the impact that their plans are having. As a result, some subjects are more developed than others.

In some subjects, leaders plan pupils' learning and experiences in a logical way. For example, in music, teachers introduce pupils to playing more complex instruments at the right time. Pupils can therefore build on what they already know, and they achieve well because of this. This includes pupils with SEND.

In other subjects, leaders have not thought as carefully about what pupils will learn and by when. Pupils do not always learn key knowledge in a logical order because teachers do not always link pupils' past learning purposefully with their current learning. For example, pupils spoke in detail about many ancient Mayan gods that they had learned about in their recent history work. However, pupils could not recall their learning about Roman and ancient Egyptian gods.

The reading curriculum is effective. Staff in the early years support children to engage positively in activities such as rhymes and stories. Children start to learn phonics as soon as they are ready. Teachers ensure that the books pupils read closely match the sounds that they are learning. Teachers check regularly how well pupils are doing. Pupils, including those at an early stage of reading in key stage 2, receive help from well-trained staff if they need it. This helps them to catch up quickly. Pupils read texts with increasing confidence as they move through the school. They enjoy reading a wide range of books and they value the importance of reading.

Leaders have also established a well-organised mathematics curriculum. This starts in the early years. Teachers know what they want pupils to learn and by when. Pupils who are struggling receive effective support. Pupils achieve well in mathematics. For example, they are increasingly able to explain how they have solved mathematical problems.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and during playtimes is generally positive. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors and to each other. Some pupils can display challenging behaviour from time to time. However, leaders and staff go above and beyond to make sure that these pupils receive the right support.

Many pupils take part in sports clubs, including football, running and cheerleading. Teachers encourage pupils to think about the wider world. Pupils raise money for charities and consider how they could help protect the environment. They learn about different religions and cultures. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They said that leaders consider their workload carefully. For example, staff told inspectors that the new approaches to reading have led to a reduction in their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is a priority. Staff have a good knowledge of families and the local community. They use this knowledge, alongside regular training, to keep pupils safe. Staff understand what to do if they have any concerns about pupils' well-being. Leaders ensure that the most vulnerable pupils receive the support that they need. Parents and carers appreciate this support.

The curriculum gives pupils many opportunities to learn how to stay safe. Younger pupils understand what a good friend is and how they should behave. Older pupils know how to stay safe online. Pupils know that staff will help them resolve any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is variation in how well leaders plan the curriculum in different subjects. Not all subject plans clearly define what pupils should learn and how this builds on what they already know and can do. This inhibits pupils from building on their learning over time. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans for all subjects clearly set out the detailed knowledge pupils should learn from the early years to Year 6. Leaders should also ensure that subject leaders have the skills that they need to create and check the impact of these plans. This will help to ensure that pupils know and remember more in all subjects.

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 outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 20 and 21 January 2016.

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 [here](#).

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	106239
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10194749
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	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kevin Toms
Headteacher	Jacqueline Walker
Website	www.st-james-hyde.tameside.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	20 – 21 January 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Roman Catholic primary school.
- The school had its most recent section 48 inspection, undertaken by the Diocese of Shrewsbury, in March 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection is due in March 2022.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and music. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke to teachers and pupils. Inspectors also listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors also looked closely at history and art and design. They met with subject leaders, reviewed pupils' work and evaluated curriculum plans.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents provided by leaders relating to their work. Inspectors spoke to the headteacher and deputy headteacher throughout the

inspection. They held virtual meetings with nine members of the governing body and met with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors spoke on the telephone to a representative of the local authority SEND team and a representative of the diocese.

- Inspectors held meetings with the staff responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors considered leaders' safeguarding processes and questioned staff's understanding of these procedures. Inspectors observed pupils during playtimes, lunchtimes and at the breakfast club. Inspectors also discussed safeguarding with pupils.
- Inspectors considered 29 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 20 free-text comments. They also spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors considered 21 responses to the staff survey, and 19 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Adam Sproston, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Joan Williamson

Ofsted Inspector

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