

# Inspection of a good school: Accrington St Mary Magdalen's Church of England Primary School

Devonshire Street, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 1DW

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Inspection dates:

12 and 13 October 2021

## **Outcome**

Accrington St Mary Magdalen's Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy to belong to this warm school community. They said that staff are helpful and caring and this makes them feel safe. Pupils enjoy playing with their friends and they get on well together.

Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and they work hard in lessons. They know that staff will encourage them to do their best. Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. These expectations are reflected in the ambitious curriculums that leaders have designed for pupils, including in the early years.

Pupils behave well so their lessons are rarely disrupted. They develop confidence and self-belief because staff notice and respond to their needs. Pupils said that bullying rarely happens in school, but that if it did staff would sort it out.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the many opportunities on offer such as clubs and trips that staff plan for them. They recalled with pleasure their past visits to Blackpool and were very excited about the 'STEAM rocket chaser' event that is coming up.

Pupils have learned that they can make a difference to others through their actions. They are proud to support charities and to play their part in the local community by collecting and distributing harvest donations.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum which is broad and appropriately ambitious for all pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember, including in the early years. Subject leaders have ordered this knowledge

carefully so that new learning builds on what pupils know already. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 they are well-placed to make a strong start at secondary school.

Mostly, subject leaders support teachers effectively to check that pupils know and remember the intended curriculum. This means that teachers use assessment well to inform how they design new learning and check on pupils' misconceptions. For example, in mathematics teachers' subject knowledge is strong and they are quick to spot and correct pupils' misconceptions. That said, in a very small number of subjects, leaders do not provide precise enough information about what pupils should learn or sufficient support to help teachers to deliver curriculums as effectively. In these subjects teachers are hindered in designing learning as well, and very occasionally they miss out important content.

Leaders have acted to ensure that pupils can read fluently and accurately by the end of Year 2. Leaders have introduced a new phonics programme and made sure that all staff are trained to deliver it effectively, including in the early years. Children in the Reception Year learn sounds and letters as soon as they begin school. Pupils who fall behind with their reading are given extra help so they can catch up quickly. Currently, all pupils from Reception class to Year 2 have an extra phonics lesson each day to make up for the teaching time that was lost as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Older pupils are enthusiastic about reading and teachers ensure that they develop their comprehension skills well. Pupils speak highly of the reading resources. They are also excited about the appealing range of books in their class libraries.

Leaders work closely with staff in the Reception class to identify children's needs swiftly. Effective support is in place across the school to support pupils with SEND to access the curriculum. Parents and carers of pupils with SEND value the updates that they receive about their children's learning. Leaders have trained staff well to deal with behaviour consistently and sensitively. This means that pupils, including pupils with SEND, can get on with learning the curriculum without distraction.

Leaders provide many opportunities through assemblies and the well-planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum to teach pupils, including children in the Reception class, about the world in which they live. Pupils have a clear understanding that everyone, regardless of their differences, should be treated with respect.

Staff are proud to work at the school and they support each other well. They appreciate that leaders and governors consider their workload. Governors are highly involved in the life of the school and committed to meeting the needs of pupils and families in the community. Following a period of supporting school leaders throughout the pandemic, they have renewed their focus on challenging leaders about the quality of the curriculum.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff are trained to recognise the signs that indicate a child may be at risk from harm. Leaders act promptly when concerns are reported. They work well with a range of outside agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils get the help that they need. Staff understand and play a valuable part in the community they serve. They are sensitive to some of the difficulties faced by families.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe online and in the community. For example, they learn about fire and road safety and what makes a healthy relationship.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not ensured that teachers have precise enough information about what pupils should learn or sufficient support to help them to deliver curriculums effectively. This prevents some teachers from designing learning that helps pupils to know and remember the intended curriculum. Leaders should ensure that, in these subjects, teachers have the necessary detail regarding curriculum content and that they can benefit from the support required to deliver intended curriculums well.

## **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, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119446
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199659
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	193
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Vickie Howe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karen Hardman
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-marymagdalens.lancs.sch.uk">www.st-marymagdalens.lancs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 and 3 March 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Accrington St Mary Magdalen's Church of England Primary School is a voluntary aided school. It is part of the Diocese of Blackburn.
- The last section 48 inspection took place in January 2017.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This is the first routine inspection that the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken this into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of staff. The inspector spoke with pupils about their work and their school. The inspector met with four members of the governing body. The inspector also had a discussion on the telephone with both a representative of the local authority and a diocesan representative.

- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding, including the employment checks undertaken when staff are appointed.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also considered responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into early reading, history and mathematics. This involved: discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils; visits to lessons; reviewing pupils' work; and listening to pupils read. The inspector also reviewed curriculum planning documents and pupils' work in a range of other subjects.

### **Inspection team**

Janette Walker, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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