

Inspection of a good school: St Stephen's Tockholes Church of England Primary School

Rock Lane, Tockholes, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 0LX

Inspection date:

21 October 2021

Outcome

St Stephen's Tockholes Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Stephen's really enjoy their education. They told inspectors that the school is a welcoming place to learn. Pupils said that being at school makes them feel safe and happy. They said that everyone cares about each other.

Pupils enjoy being rewarded for good work and behaviour. Examples of misbehaviour are rare. Teachers expect high standards of behaviour in lessons. Learning is hardly ever disturbed.

Pupils understand what constitutes bullying. They can articulate how victims of bullying might feel. Those who could remember any cases of bullying or unkindness said that teachers dealt with these immediately, so that they did not happen again.

Pupils are glad that the many extra-curricular activities that the school usually organises are resuming as COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. They described their happy memories of exciting educational visits, which will soon take place again. These include performing in theatres, visiting waterparks and attending art galleries.

Pupils take leadership responsibilities very seriously. School council members are chosen by their peers to represent pupils' views when leaders are making decisions about the school.

Teachers expect pupils to work hard in all subjects. They give pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the help that they need to succeed. Overall, pupils achieve well.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum for pupils. They have fully incorporated the school's key aims and values into the curriculum. These include the development of spirituality, resilience, initiative and respect for the environment.

In this school of only two classes, the curriculum plans in each subject are carefully organised to support pupils in mixed-age classes to learn effectively. Leaders' well-organised curriculum plans lay out clearly what pupils should know and remember by the end of each year. Teachers revisit essential knowledge several times over a key stage so that pupils have frequent opportunities to consolidate prior learning and build on it over time.

The school's expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are high. Teachers have a deep knowledge of all the subjects that they teach. All pupils, including those with SEND, progress well through most subjects, including mathematics and English. However, on occasions, in some subjects, the activities that teachers choose to introduce new knowledge are not the most appropriate to help pupils learn about the subject. Very occasionally, teachers miss out some of the subject-specific content outlined in curriculum plans. Consequently, pupils' knowledge in some areas of these subjects lacks sufficient depth.

Teachers encourage pupils to read widely. Pupils talked excitedly to the inspector about their favourite books and authors, and about World Book Day. Teachers read stories and poems to pupils with infectious enthusiasm.

Children begin to learn to read from the start of Reception Year. The teaching of early reading is very well planned and monitored. There is a high level of consistency in how staff teach daily phonics sessions. In early years, teachers match books carefully to children's reading ability.

Pupils progress well through the phonics programme. Leaders ensure that those pupils who have fallen behind in reading, including those with SEND, get the help that they need to catch up with their peers. Older pupils continue to develop their fluency in reading. By the end of Year 6, they are well prepared for the demands of the secondary-school curriculum.

The curriculum in early years is very well planned. Mathematics, reading, writing and speaking are developed across all areas of learning. The development of vocabulary is a strong feature of the early years curriculum. Staff know how children learn. They make sure that they are happy and settled and enjoy learning.

Pupils with SEND are very well supported in following the same curriculum as their classmates and learn confidently alongside them in the same classroom. Leaders and teachers are effective in identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with SEND. The school has a very strong focus on developing 'the whole child'. Pupils are taught right from wrong. They learn about other ethnicities, cultures and religions. Pupils respect people who are different from themselves.

Teachers deal swiftly with the very rare instances of misbehaviour and bullying. Teachers model a calm and respectful manner and pupils copy their example. Pupils behave very well in class and at social times.

Staff enjoy working at this school. They told inspectors that they feel valued and supported by leaders, including governors. They welcome opportunities to collaborate with other schools to share expertise and good practice.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including very experienced governors, ensure that everyone at the school understands their role in keeping pupils safe. Staff are trained in how to implement the school's policies. Leaders' safeguarding procedures are very efficient.

Staff know pupils and their families well. The 'emotions chart' that pupils fill in every morning contributes to staff quickly noticing if something is wrong. Staff work very well with external specialists so that pupils receive the help that they need.

Pupils have been taught how to keep themselves safe, including if approached by strangers, and when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some of the activities chosen by teachers to introduce new knowledge and concepts are not the most appropriate pedagogical choices. Added to this, teachers sometimes omit some of the subject-specific content that is outlined in curriculum plans. As a result, pupils' knowledge in some areas of these subjects lacks sufficient depth. Leaders should ensure that teachers implement the school's curriculum plans as intended to allow pupils to develop a deep and rich knowledge across the full breadth of 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, 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 a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 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

Unique reference number	119459
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10199996
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	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Adnitt
Headteacher	Michelle Smith
Website	www.tockholeschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 September 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher is the executive headteacher of this school and The Redeemer Primary School.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- St Stephen's Tockholes is a Church of England voluntary-aided primary school. Its previous section 48 inspection took place in June 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors also spoke to members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, science and history. This involved discussions with subject leaders and teachers, as well as talking to pupils about their work. Inspectors visited lessons in these subjects and looked at

curriculum plans and pupils' work. An inspector heard individual younger pupils reading to their teachers.

- An inspector analysed the school's records of recruitment checks on staff. Inspectors spoke to staff and leaders about the school's procedures and systems for safeguarding pupils. They also discussed with staff and pupils how the school teaches pupils to keep themselves safe, including when on the internet.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and at social times.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. This included the free-text responses. Inspectors also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Liz Kelly, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Michelle Joyce

Ofsted Inspector

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