

Inspection of a good school: East Crompton St James Church of England Primary School

St James Street, Shaw, Oldham, Lancashire OL2 7TD

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 November 2021

Outcome

East Crompton St James Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils said that they are happy at school. They enjoy their lessons. They were full of smiles as they played games, such as table tennis and cricket, at breaktimes. Pupils enjoy playing on the outdoor climbing frame and in the tunnel. They enjoy their learning through visits such as the Year 6 residential trip to Castleshaw.

Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe and that they have someone to go to if they have a worry. Most of them said that teachers deal well with any bullying or name-calling. Pupils meet teachers' expectations of behaving sensibly in class. They are polite, good mannered and respond positively to adults.

Pupils know that teachers expect them to work hard. They do their best in a range of lessons and subjects. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour match leaders' ambitions to 'encourage one another and build one another up'.

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

Teachers have carefully designed most of the curriculum. This helps pupils to achieve well. In most subjects, teachers have broken down what they want pupils to know and do into small chunks of learning. They have then ordered these chunks so that pupils have the best chance to know more and remember more of the curriculum. Pupils can remember and talk about several topics in mathematics, such as shape, time and graphs. This is because, over time, they have built their knowledge and understanding. Pupils think carefully and give reasons for their answers to mathematical problems. In a few subjects, leaders' planning for developing pupils' knowledge is not as ambitious as it should be.

Most of the curriculum in the early years helps children to build the knowledge and understanding that they need. For example, staff teach children how to fix things together while they investigate in the construction area. Children learn how to follow plans and how to strengthen and stabilise models.

Pupils' work in different subjects indicates that leaders plan most subjects clearly from the Reception Year through to the end of Year 6. The restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic have delayed some of the development of leaders' plans for the curriculum. They are working effectively to make sure the knowledge taught in early years, in the few remaining subjects, leads seamlessly into Year 1.

Teachers assess pupils' learning carefully. They identify any gaps that pupils may have in their knowledge. Extra support and additional teaching in English and mathematics help pupils to catch up in their learning.

Most pupils achieve well in reading because leaders give reading a high priority. Pupils in Year 6 spoke confidently about a range of books and authors. They read widely and often. Governors and leaders have invested time and resources into developing reading at the school. Books and library areas are attractive and inviting because teachers maintain them well. Most pupils gain the reading knowledge that they need to read fluently. Leaders and staff give many pupils the extra support they need to learn to read. However, a few pupils, for example those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not read as fluently as they might. They stop and start frequently and have trouble in saying the sounds that letters represent. This is partly because the books are sometimes too difficult for them. It is also because they do not have secure knowledge of how to blend sounds into words.

Due to pupils' positive behaviour, there is very little disruption in lessons. Pupils confirmed that they can get on with their work and can concentrate in lessons. Pupils respond well to adults' requests. Pupils debate current affairs. Some of the debates and discussions are mature and sophisticated. Pupils learn about personal boundaries and how to prevent stereotyping. Through this, and other work, pupils build a good understanding of social, moral and cultural issues. Leaders make sure that pupils have access to a range of trips and experiences to build pupils' understanding of the world.

Staff make good use of a range of professional support to help them to identify if a pupil has SEND. There is a strong direction to staff from leaders to make sure that all pupils with SEND play a full and active part in school life.

Governors and leaders make sure that staff have a reasonable work-life balance. The governing body supports and challenges leaders well. The school makes good use of external specialists to make sure that the curriculum, for example in English and mathematics, is successful.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders use an effective system to identify safeguarding risks and issues. Teachers know how to record and log concerns when they feel that something may be negatively affecting a pupil. Leaders liaise well with other agencies, including health, social care and the police, to manage any concerns. When managing safeguarding concerns, leaders are persistent when they are dissatisfied with the response from other professionals. Staff teach pupils to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders do not plan the curriculum in enough detail. Leaders do not set out clearly the small chunks of knowledge that staff will teach children and pupils. A few curriculum plans for key stages 1 and 2 are not as ambitious as they could be. This means that some pupils do not learn all of the knowledge that they need for Year 7. Leaders should continue to revise the remaining subjects to make sure that all their curriculum plans are ambitious for pupils' learning.
- The books that some pupils read are too difficult for them. A few pupils, particularly those with SEND, struggle to read fluently. They do not know their phonics well enough. They find difficulty in blending sounds and segmenting words that they do not know. Leaders should improve how well staff teach phonics, including by giving pupils reading books that match their phonics knowledge. This will help to give all pupils the knowledge they need to read successfully.

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 April 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	105710
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10199718
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	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kathryn Jackson
Headteacher	Adam Laskey (executive headteacher)
Website	info@st-james.oldham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 April 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The governing body manages a breakfast club on weekday mornings at the school.
- The most recent section 48 inspection was on 8 June 2016.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account.
- The inspector met with representatives of Oldham local authority and the Diocese of Manchester. He met with the school's improvement partner.
- The inspector spoke with three members of the governing body. He met senior leaders, including the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- The inspector spoke with a range of staff, including those new to teaching, and to some staff who work across both schools in the federation.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: design and technology, mathematics and early reading. For the deep dives, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects, including geography, physical education, science and music.
- The inspector discussed elements of safeguarding and behaviour with senior leaders, teachers and members of the governing body. He considered attendance information and information from Ofsted's online surveys completed by parents, carers, pupils and staff.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils to find out what they thought about their lessons and pupils' behaviour. He observed breaktimes and looked through pupils' work in personal, social, health and economic education.

Inspection team

Allan Torr, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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