

# Inspection of a good school: St Nicholas Church of England Primary School

St Nicholas Road, Church, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 4DN

---

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 January 2022

## Outcome

St Nicholas Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, staff, parents and carers said that St Nicholas Church of England Primary School is 'one big loving family'. It is a happy and welcoming place for pupils to learn and thrive.

Pupils explained that they feel safe in school. They enjoy learning in a supportive environment. Pupils said that staff care about them. They trust staff to help them when they need support.

Staff have high expectations of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They expect every pupil to achieve well. Staff are successful at making this happen. Pupils are equally ambitious to learn as much as possible. Pupils said that they love to learn new knowledge.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They know how to spot bullying. They said that if bullying ever does occur, adults act to stop it straight away. Most parents agree that bullying is dealt with effectively.

The school's values, and leaders' commitment to nurture and develop the character of pupils, are of benefit to pupils' wider personal development. Pupils gave the inspector many examples of how they live out the school's values in their everyday lives. For example, pupils relish showing kindness to a friend or persevering with their schoolwork.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn and how to get the best out of pupils. They have ensured that the curriculum is well planned in almost every subject. The curriculum in the early years is also well planned and delivered.

The majority of curriculum plans set out in detail the knowledge that teachers will teach, and in what order. In the subjects that are very well planned, staff think carefully about

the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils need to succeed academically. However, a very small number of curriculum plans are less well developed than others.

In those subjects that are less well planned, the order of the knowledge that teachers want pupils to learn is not as clear as it could be. Occasionally, this hinders some pupils' ability to get the most out of the curriculum on offer. Despite this weakness, pupils, and children in the early years, achieve well across the curriculum. This is because, overall, leaders have created a broad, interesting and ambitious curriculum. In the main, the curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stages in their education and for life in modern Britain.

Teachers' enthusiasm for the curriculum motivates pupils. Pupils said that they appreciate how teachers make learning interesting. Teachers, including those in the early years, explain new ideas clearly. They are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach.

In most subjects, teachers help pupils revisit and recap important learning. However, on occasions, teachers do not have the strategies required to ensure that pupils make secure connections between new and previously learned concepts and ideas. This sometimes hinders pupils' learning.

Reading is extremely important in this school. The school has a rich and varied supply of appropriate books. Regular story times and access to books in all classes support pupils to develop a love of reading. Pupils said that reading 'helps you with your own writing' and 'enables you to feel calm'.

As soon as children start in the Reception class, they successfully learn letters and sounds through carefully planned activities. Adults in the early years and in key stage 1 use their specialist knowledge of the teaching of early reading well. This ensures that most pupils can read with fluency and confidence by the time they leave Year 2. Pupils who find reading more difficult are well supported by adults. This helps pupils to catch up quickly with their reading.

Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils. They want everyone to achieve their very best. Teachers are quick to notice and to help if a pupil is struggling. Adults know their children and pupils very well and give them the right guidance to succeed. Pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND have their needs met successfully. Leaders ensure that these pupils have the same opportunities to access the school's ambitious curriculum as their classmates.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous. Pupils are always ready to open a door for someone. They readily give a helping hand to adults and their peers.

Leaders successfully prioritise pupils' wider personal development. Staff provide pupils with rich opportunities to live out the school's values, such as respect and trust, as part of the well-planned wider personal development curriculum.

Pupils have access to a broad range of extra-curricular activities. These opportunities enable pupils to try out activities that they would not usually be able to experience. For

example, pupils have access to skateboarding, fencing, musical theatre and ultimate frisbee.

Leaders and governors have established a strong and cohesive team. Governors are experienced. They hold leaders fully to account for the quality of education that the school provides. Staff are extremely proud to work at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff act in the best interests of pupils. They are vigilant and quick to follow up any safeguarding concerns. Leaders keep accurate and well-documented records of any safeguarding issues.

Staff and governors take part in regular training to keep pupils' welfare and safety at the forefront of their work. Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils and families receive the help and support that they need.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They know how to use the internet safely and how to report any worrying signs to adults. The curriculum successfully teaches pupils about keeping themselves safe and how to manage risks.

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

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

- In one or two subjects, leaders have not thought carefully enough about what pupils should learn and in what order. Pupils do not achieve as highly as they could in these subjects. Leaders should revise the curriculum content to ensure that teachers know exactly what knowledge pupils must learn and when.
- Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to help pupils to make connections between elements of their learning. This means that some pupils do not recognise how to integrate new knowledge into larger ideas. This sometimes hampers pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the strategies that they require to help pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding of key ideas and concepts.

## 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 February 2017.

## 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>             | 119447   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Lancashire   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10212412   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 5 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 199  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Peter Blackburn  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Sharon Taylor  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.st-nicholas.lancs.sch.uk">www.st-nicholas.lancs.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 7 and 8 February 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005               |

## Information about this school

- This Church of England school is voluntary aided. It last had a religious education inspection carried out under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in June 2017.
- At the time of the inspection, a temporary headteacher was in post. The previous headteacher left at the end of December 2021. The governing body is in the process of recruiting a new permanent headteacher.
- The school uses one alternative provider.

## 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 this into account in her evaluation.
- During the inspection, the inspector spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. The inspector spoke with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. She also talked to the special educational needs coordinator and held discussions with staff which focused on the well-being and safeguarding of pupils.

- The inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She spoke with a representative of the local authority. The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including those relating to school improvement, safeguarding and the checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the responses received via the free-text facility. She also considered the responses to Ofsted’s staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted’s pupil survey.
- The inspector talked with pupils about the books that they like to read. She also heard pupils read.
- The inspector looked in detail at early reading, mathematics and history. For each of these subjects, she held discussions with curriculum leaders and teachers, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils’ work and talked with pupils. She also considered other subjects across the curriculum.

### **Inspection team**

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s 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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022