

# Inspection of a good school: Burnley St Stephen's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Woodgrove Road, Burnley, Lancashire BB11 3EJ

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Inspection dates:

12 and 13 January 2022

## Outcome

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

## What is it like to attend this school?

All pupils receive a warm welcome at St Stephen's Primary School. Staff respect the individuality of each pupil.

Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), live up to the high expectations that leaders have of them. Pupils achieve well. The inspector observed pupils with happy, smiling faces, learning and enjoying school. Pupils relish the time they spend outdoors, playing happily with their friends in the large and well-resourced outdoor play area.

Pupils said that they feel safe. They are happy to talk with staff about any worries or concerns that they may have. Pupils care about each other. Most pupils behave well so that they can all get on with their work sensibly. Leaders deal with any instances of bullying effectively.

Pupils access a wide range of varied and interesting opportunities beyond the academic curriculum. They help to make decisions within the school through their roles as school councillors and eco-warriors. Year 6 pupils particularly enjoy being buddies to the younger children in the Reception class. High-quality displays in school corridors bring the curriculum to life.

Most parents and carers would recommend the school to others. They typically commented: 'St Stephen's is a fantastic school, it's like a family. Staff are professional, approachable and helpful.'

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

Leaders, governors and staff are united in their desire to provide the best possible education for all pupils, including pupils with SEND. Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn. They have designed a curriculum that is ambitious and enjoyable, and meets the needs of pupils who attend the school. Many subjects are logically planned and sequenced. However, at times, in some subjects, leaders do not clearly identify the key pieces of knowledge that pupils must know and remember.

In some subjects, leaders monitor their curriculum areas of responsibility effectively. They regularly visit lessons and make detailed checks of the curriculums and pupils' work. This gives subject leaders a secure overview of how well the intended curriculum is being delivered in practice. The monitoring of some other subjects is not as well developed. This is because some aspects of the monitoring of these subjects were paused due to the restrictions of the pandemic.

Pupils said that 'being able to read gives wings to our imagination'. Children in the Reception class are introduced to the joys of singing songs, reciting rhymes and reading books as soon as they start at school. Story sessions in early years are a magical experience for children. Well-trained staff deliver the school's phonics programme effectively. The books that pupils read are closely matched to the sounds that they know. This helps pupils to become confident and fluent readers. Staff use assessment information effectively to pinpoint the support that pupils who are struggling to read need. Pupils benefit from the extra support that they receive. Older pupils talk confidently about their favourite authors and the different types of books they like to read. Pupils make good use of the well-stocked library, which is the focal point at the entrance to the school.

Teachers explain new subject knowledge clearly. Staff act quickly to correct misunderstandings. For example, when pupils mispronounce sounds in phonics lessons, staff gently and sensitively correct them. In a mathematics lesson, the teacher stopped the lesson to explain to pupils how to use a thermometer correctly. Most pupils listen well in class and are keen to learn.

Pupils are proud of their achievements, and some can talk about things they have previously learned. In key stage 1, pupils talked confidently about a recent local historical study of Burnley Football Club. Older pupils explained that earlier learning in how to add, subtract, multiply and divide is now helping them to solve more complex mathematical problems.

Leaders quickly identify pupils with SEND through well-established routines. With support and additional resources, these pupils access the same curriculum as their friends in class. Pupils with SEND are fully involved in all aspects of school life. If needed, the school buys in support from outside agencies to ensure that these pupils receive the support that they need.

Pupils access a wide range of opportunities to broaden their awareness of the world around them through a varied range of trips and clubs. They raise money for different

charities. Pupils develop global links by supporting children in Sierra Leone to access an education. They gain an appreciation of our diverse world by learning about different faiths and cultures. Leaders are considerate of pupils' physical and mental health.

Governors know the school well and are proud of its achievements. They are supportive of the headteacher and offer support and challenge in equal measure. Members are not afraid to ask probing questions, especially around the quality of education.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding. This helps them to quickly spot if pupils are becoming anxious or distressed. Staff have a secure understanding of safeguarding risks in the local area. They are clear about the procedures to follow should they have a concern regarding a pupil's welfare or safety. Leaders work well with other agencies to ensure that families facing challenging circumstances get the help that they need.

Through the curriculum, pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They learn about healthy relationships, the importance of consent and how to stay safe when online.

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

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

- Occasionally, the curriculums in some subjects and year groups do not clearly identify the key pieces of knowledge that pupils must learn. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well in these subjects as they are capable of doing. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculums clearly and consistently identify the essential knowledge that they want pupils to learn and retain. This will help pupils know more and remember more.
- Some subject leaders have not made detailed checks to ensure that the curriculums are working in practice. As a result, they do not have a secure understanding of how well pupils are achieving in these subjects. Leaders need to ensure that the monitoring arrangements for these subjects are of the same high quality as is evident in other areas of the curriculum.

## **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 July 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>	119486
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199922
<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>	209
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	John Hughes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jo Roberts
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ststephensburnley.com">www.ststephensburnley.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 and 7 July 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and chair of governors have been appointed.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school's last Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist School was completed in January 2019.

## Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation.

- The inspector met with the headteacher and members of staff.
- She met with six governors and with two representatives from the local authority.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding. The inspector also spoke to staff about safeguarding.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in class, in the dining hall and in the outdoor play area. She also spoke with staff about their well-being and workload.
- The inspector talked with parents as they dropped their children off at school. She also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the responses to the online staff and pupil questionnaires.
- The inspector conducted deep dives into early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, she spoke with subject leaders and teachers. The inspector visited lessons and spoke with some pupils about their learning. The inspector looked at samples of pupils' work. She observed pupils reading with a familiar adult. The inspector also looked at the curriculums and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.

### **Inspection team**

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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