

Inspection of a good school: Antrobus St Mark's Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Antrobus, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 6LB

Inspection date:

26 January 2022

Outcome

Antrobus St Mark's Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Antrobus St Mark's is a school at the heart of the community. Pupils rush to school each morning. They love the time they spend there. They feel safe because of the close relationships that they form with the supportive staff. Pupils said that the best thing about their school is how welcoming and friendly everyone is. Pupils typically commented: 'We are a small school, and all close friends.'

Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school. They appreciate the care and attention staff give to their children. A typical comment from a parent stated that: 'The staff are friendly and always approachable.'

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils live up to these high expectations. They behave well and work hard. They said that bullying is incredibly rare, but that staff would help to stop it quickly if it happened. Most pupils achieve well across a range of subjects.

Pupils enjoy the many experiences that leaders provide for them. Younger pupils, including children in early years, enjoy spotting animals in the school's woodlands. Pupils talked with enthusiasm about the responsibilities that they have. These include being a member of the school council or the eco-council. Older pupils encourage younger pupils to take part in a wide range of sports, such as circuit training and archery.

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

Leaders and governors have ensured that the curriculum is engaging and ambitious. Leaders have identified what they want pupils to learn in most subjects, from early years to Year 6. This important knowledge is clearly organised and allows pupils to build on what they already know. For example, in mathematics, teachers make sure that pupils have a secure understanding of number before they expect pupils to solve complex calculations. In physical education (PE), pupils master important movement skills, such as balance, before using these skills in team games. As a result of this curriculum thinking,

pupils gain confidence and achieve well. However, they are unable to do this in a small number of subjects, as leaders have not identified the most important knowledge that they want pupils to learn.

Teachers have the skills to deliver the curriculum well. This is because leaders ensure that staff receive relevant training to hone their subject knowledge. As a result, teachers select appropriate activities to help pupils learn the curriculum. Teachers regularly revisit pupils' prior learning. This helps pupils to remember their learning. Staff regularly check pupils' understanding. This means that they can quickly intervene if any pupil needs more support. The effective early identification of pupils with SEND ensures that these pupils get the help that they need. Pupils with SEND access the same broad and ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Reading is central to the school's curriculum. Children in Nursery Year develop their vocabulary and listening skills quickly due to the language-rich curriculum. The teaching of phonics starts as soon as children join the Reception class. Leaders have implemented an ambitious curriculum that introduces children to phonics in a systematic way. Staff deliver this curriculum well, but some have not had specific training. Training has been hindered in part by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, a small number of staff lack the confidence to deliver the phonics curriculum as well as they could. The books that pupils read are well matched to their phonics knowledge. Staff check pupils' learning often. They offer effective support to any pupil who needs it. Older pupils enjoy reading a wide range of books with confidence. Most pupils develop as confident and fluent readers.

Children in early years and pupils in other classes behave well. This is because staff set very high expectations. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and respect their peers. They play well with their friends at social times.

Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They understand the importance of treating everyone with respect. Some pupils told an inspector: 'It's good to be different. If we were all the same, life would not be as fun.' That said, some pupils' knowledge of diversity, including how families and cultures can be different from their own, is limited. This means that they are not as prepared as they should be for life in modern Britain.

Staff are positive about the support that they receive from leaders and governors. They appreciate the consideration leaders give to their workload and well-being. For example, leaders have reviewed the assessment system, in consultation with staff, to make it more purposeful for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training. They know each pupil well. This means that they can quickly spot any signs of neglect. Leaders and governors have strengthened their record-keeping systems. Leaders use this information effectively to swiftly escalate concerns to other agencies if required.

Pupils know that they should speak to a trusted adult if anything makes them feel uncomfortable. This includes when they are working or playing online. Leaders plan other activities so that pupils learn to stay safe. For example, pupil road safety officers promote the importance of wearing reflective clothing on dark nights.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all staff have received suitable training to deliver the phonics curriculum with confidence. The pandemic has partly hindered this. As a result, a small number of staff are not confident to teach the new curriculum as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that all staff receive appropriate training so that they can deliver the new phonics curriculum as intended.
- Some pupils do not have a detailed enough knowledge of diversity, for example of cultures and families that are different from their own. Leaders should make sure that the curriculum contains effective opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of diversity. This will better prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum does not show the essential knowledge that pupils should learn. This means that pupils are not able to build their current learning on what has come before. Leaders should ensure that all curriculums identify the knowledge that pupils will learn from early years to Year 6.

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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2012.

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	111246
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10204429
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lisa Rigby
Headteacher	Lucy Wainwright
Website	www.antrobusandbudworthprimaryschools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to staffing and governance. This includes the appointment of a new headteacher and chair of governors.
- The school is in a hard federation with Great Budworth Church of England Primary School.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in November 2017.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and PE. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke to teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors also considered other subjects, including music and science. An inspector met with subject leaders, reviewed pupils' work and evaluated these curriculums.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation. The lead inspector spoke to the headteacher and deputy headteacher throughout the inspection. An inspector also met with the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- The lead inspector met remotely with governors, including the chair of the governing body. He spoke to a representative of the diocese and also to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors held meetings with the staff responsible for safeguarding and scrutinised the single central record. They considered leaders' safeguarding processes and asked staff questions to establish their understanding of these procedures. Inspectors observed pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes. They discussed safeguarding with pupils.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Adam Sproston, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Joan Grant

Ofsted Inspector

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