

# Inspection of St James' Church of England Primary School

Crossfield Road, Wardle, Rochdale, Lancashire OL12 9JW

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Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly, happy school. They describe their lessons as fun and interesting. Pupils appreciate the care that staff give to them. This helps pupils to feel safe. Pupils know that if they have any worries or concerns, they can share these with their teachers. Pupils told inspectors that if any bullying were to take place, leaders would deal with it swiftly and appropriately.

Leaders are determined that all pupils will achieve well. Pupils develop a wide range of knowledge across different subjects. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils develop as confident, resilient and successful learners.

Pupils are fully involved in village life. They love taking part in village events such as the Scarecrow Festival. Pupils fulfil the school values of joy, kindness and generosity. For example, they write to residents of local care homes and take part in fundraising for charity. They develop as active and caring citizens.

Pupils behave well. They strive to achieve rewards for exemplary behaviour. Older pupils are proud to take on leadership roles, such as playground pals and sports leaders. They help younger pupils to stay active and happy at playtimes.

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

Leaders have planned a detailed and interesting curriculum which is closely matched to pupils' needs. The curriculum builds pupils' learning in a logical way. For example, in geography, pupils develop their knowledge of locations in carefully ordered steps. Children's learning in the Reception class is thoughtfully considered by leaders to prepare them for their future learning in Year 1 and beyond.

In most subjects, subject leaders have identified the most important knowledge that pupils need to secure before moving on to new learning. In a small number of subjects, these leaders are making refinements to the curriculum structure to ensure that teachers know what steps in learning pupils need to make.

Leaders have placed reading firmly at the centre of the school's curriculum. Pupils understand the importance of reading. As one pupil said, 'The more you read, the more you understand.' In each class, teachers share a wide range of books and stories with pupils. Pupils appreciate the quiet times that teachers give them to read for pleasure.

Leaders provide regular training, which means that staff have expertise in the teaching of reading. In phonics lessons, pupils learn to read in carefully planned and logical steps. Staff provide effective support for any pupils who need additional help in learning to read accurately and fluently. The books that pupils take home are matched closely to the sounds that they learn in class. Pupils develop as fluent and confident readers.

In classes, staff make regular checks to see how well pupils are remembering important knowledge. They ask pupils questions, carry out mini quizzes and have regular class discussions. Where needed, teachers ensure that pupils revisit previous work that they have forgotten or not understood. This ensures that pupils do not move on to new work too quickly. In most subjects, systems are in place for leaders to check how well pupils are achieving over time. In a small number of subjects, these systems are not in place.

Leaders work closely with teachers, parents and carers to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified quickly and accurately. Staff share leaders' determination to ensure that pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers make careful adaptations to their teaching in order to support these pupils with their learning. Through a range of thoughtful and effective support, staff ensure that pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils concentrate well in class. They do not give up when work is tricky and they work together with cooperation. These characteristics are nurtured in pupils from when they start in the Reception class. In a gymnastics lesson, children in the Reception class were engrossed in devising sequences of movement, chatting happily together as they planned their routines. Pupils move around the school calmly and sensibly. They are polite and welcoming to visitors.

Through a carefully planned curriculum, leaders ensure that pupils develop personally. Pupils benefit from participating in a wide range of sporting events, including lacrosse, football and cross-country running. Pupils learn about different cultures and appreciate differences. They visit the local church regularly and enjoy taking part in the school prayer group. However, pupils have limited knowledge of religions other than Christianity.

The trust, local governing body and leaders in school share a determination to fulfil the school's mission, 'Committed to Excellence'. The trust and governors provide wide-ranging support and challenge to leaders. This helps leaders with school improvements, such as to the curriculum. Leaders are considerate of staff workload and well-being when making decisions.

The school's committed staff work harmoniously together. As one staff member said, 'We are like a family.' Teachers new to their careers appreciate the support and training that their colleagues provide.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have regular safeguarding training. This ensures that all are alert to possible signs of abuse. Staff report any concerns to leaders quickly. Safeguarding leaders follow the latest government guidance when dealing with any safeguarding concerns.

Leaders work closely with a range of external agencies to protect pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils and their families get the support that they need.

Through the curriculum, pupils find out about a range of situations which may lead to harm. For example, pupils learn about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Pupils know that they should speak to a trusted adult if the actions of others make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

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

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

- In a small number of subjects, the structure of the curriculum lacks some detail. Leaders should ensure that in these curriculum areas, subject leaders develop their curriculum thinking and identify what important knowledge pupils need to secure before moving on to new learning. Subject leaders should use this information to ensure that, in all subjects, pupils build their learning in a logical way.
- In a small number of subjects, assessment systems to check how well pupils are learning over time are not developed. Not all subject leaders have precise knowledge of how well pupils know and remember some elements of the taught curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the assessment systems are developed so that the information collected can be used to identify how well pupils are learning.
- Trips and teaching about other religions were interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has resulted in some pupils not having a firm understanding of the different faiths that they may encounter in their lives. Leaders should ensure that pupils improve their understanding of a range of religions.

## **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>	144689
<b>Local authority</b>	Rochdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	10204465
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	203
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Colin McKenzie
<b>Headteacher</b>	Judith Rainford
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stjameswardle.co.uk">www.stjameswardle.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- St James' Church of England Primary School became an academy in September 2017. When its predecessor school, St James' Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement overall.
- The school is a Church of England school. The school has not had a section 48 inspection since it opened as an academy.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- There have been significant changes in staffing since the school opened. These include the appointment of an interim executive headteacher and two assistant headteachers.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and phonics, mathematics, geography and Spanish. For each deep dive, inspectors 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. Inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders and pupils about some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about school life, including behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of staff, including the interim executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers and the school's special educational needs coordinator. They spoke with governors, the chief executive officer and the chair of the trust. They spoke with a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View. They spoke with parents at the start of the school day. They considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. They spoke with staff to understand how they keep pupils safe. They reviewed the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to discuss leaders' support for them.

### **Inspection team**

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Elizabeth Clarke

Ofsted Inspector

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