

Inspection of a good school: Hurst Knoll St James' Church of England Primary School

Ladbroke Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire OL6 8JS

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 July 2022

Outcome

Hurst Knoll St James' Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well across a range of subjects.

Pupils, including children in the early years, listen carefully to their teachers and follow the school rules. They try their best. Pupils know that help is on hand from staff if they find their learning tricky.

Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They generally behave well in lessons and around school. As a result, the school is a calm place in which to learn. Older pupils are proud of their prefect and lead learner responsibilities. Through these roles, they set high standards for other pupils in school to follow.

Pupils benefit from many opportunities, including clubs and educational visits. Leaders have mapped these in their 'experience charter', which is a list of events and activities that pupils will experience during their time in school. For example, pupils enjoy visits to the aquarium, the zoo and to the orchestra.

Staff ensure that everyone is treated equally, with respect and dignity. Pupils feel safe and happy. They know that staff will deal with any bullying incidents swiftly and effectively. Older pupils feel well prepared for high school.

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

Leaders have built a curriculum which reflects their ambition for all pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is designed so that pupils extend their vocabulary in each subject. In most subjects, learning builds on what pupils already know and understand in well-ordered steps as they move

through the school. The curriculum in the early years provides secure foundations for children's future learning. Staff deliver the curriculum effectively.

Leaders have made sure that teachers know what pupils need to learn and understand in most subjects. However, a small number of subjects are at an earlier stage of development. Leaders have not clarified in sufficient detail what pupils should know in these subjects. This sometimes prevents teachers from revisiting earlier learning to ensure that pupils' knowledge is secure. As a result, some pupils do not remember the important knowledge that they need to be successful in future learning.

Teachers check how well pupils learn. In most subjects, including English and mathematics, teachers use these checks to identify which pupils need more help or guidance. As a result, teachers change their approach effectively in order to help pupils deepen their understanding.

Leaders ensure that the phonics curriculum is well organised and meets the needs of pupils. Teachers deliver the phonics curriculum well. They check pupils' recall of phonics before introducing new sounds and letters. Where pupils' recall is not as secure, pupils receive effective additional support to make sure that they can keep up with their classmates. By the end of key stage 1, the majority of pupils can read fluently and confidently.

In key stage 2, leaders have introduced a well-structured reading curriculum to ensure that pupils continue to develop their reading fluency and comprehension skills. Any pupils who are falling behind receive appropriate support to help them catch up. As a result, pupils' understanding of the texts that they read, as well as their confidence and fluency, improve over time. Older pupils enjoy reading. They talked with some enthusiasm about the books they have read.

Leaders identify the specific needs of pupils with SEND effectively. Staff are well trained to meet the needs of these pupils. Some pupils are further supported by specialists in the learning and pastoral teams and from outside agencies. Together, staff and professionals ensure that pupils with SEND access the same learning as their classmates.

Pupils behave well. They listen well in class and, mostly, concentrate on their learning. Pupils are keen to do their best. In the early years, children follow the class routines confidently. This helps them to learn and play together well.

Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents. For example, pupils receive swimming lessons, cycle training and enjoy attending a wide range of clubs. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe and healthy. They have opportunities to develop leadership skills and responsibilities.

Staff talked positively about the strong teamwork and supportive relationships that exist in the school. They value how leaders consider their workload carefully. They appreciate leaders' understanding of their work-life balance. Staff said that they are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have implemented clear procedures for the identification of families and pupils at risk of harm. They provide appropriate training to ensure that staff have an effective knowledge and understanding to help to keep pupils safe. Staff identify concerns swiftly and promptly. Leaders involve other agencies when required. This ensures that pupils and their families are well supported.

Leaders have developed the curriculum to include personal safety, including online safety and road safety. This is further enhanced by outside visitors, for example the local community police officers. Pupils know how to report any concerns that they may find online or in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not identified the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. As a result, teachers are not ensuring that pupils' earlier knowledge is secure before they introduce new concepts. This means that, at times, some pupils do not remember the important knowledge that they need to be successful in the future. Leaders should ensure that the curriculums in these subjects identify the important knowledge so that pupils can embed earlier learning and build securely on what they know.

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 second 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

Unique reference number	106229
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10212415
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elizabeth Daunt
Headteacher	Jonathon Hobday
Website	www.hurstknollschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The school received its last section 48 inspection, undertaken by the Diocese of Manchester in November 2016.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and with other leaders and members of staff throughout the inspection. He also spoke with a group of governors. The inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority and the school's improvement partner.

- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including the school's central record of checks undertaken on staff and visitors, and he looked at safeguarding records.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. He talked with curriculum leaders of these subject areas. The inspector also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils about their learning. The inspector also observed pupils reading to teaching assistants.
- The inspector also considered other subjects. He discussed the curriculums with leaders and reviewed pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in class and as they moved around school. He also observed pupils in the dining hall and playing outside at lunchtime.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their experiences at school.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He also met with parents and carers before school to find out their views of the school.
- The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Ian Shackleton, Ofsted Inspector

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