

Inspection of an outstanding school: Blackpool St Nicholas CofE Primary School

School Road, Marton Moss, Blackpool, Lancashire FY4 5DS

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 September 2022

Outcome

Blackpool St Nicholas CofE Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and children in the early years, are extremely proud to attend this school. They said that they relish being part of this friendly, caring and welcoming learning community where everybody matters. Pupils told inspectors that they feel very safe in school.

Pupils explained that all staff have exceptionally high expectations of their behaviour. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Children in the early years are keen to share and take turns. Pupils regulate their own behaviour with ease and they support one another to maintain high standards of behaviour.

Pupils said that staff are quick to deal with any worries that they may have. They explained that bullying is highly unusual. On the rare occasions that it may occur, they said that it is dealt with effectively.

Adults are highly ambitious for pupils' learning and development. Pupils said that they thrive at this school. Adults ensure that pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn exceptionally well. Children in the early years are expertly prepared for the demands of key stage 1.

Adults foster pupils' leadership skills. For example, pupils seize the opportunity to become prefects, reading ambassadors, members of the pupil executive and the school council. Older pupils mentor younger pupils. They also enjoy helping in the Reception class at lunchtime. Pupils described this school as harmonious.

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

Leaders have created an extremely ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including for children in the early years. The order that pupils learn new knowledge, from their arrival in the Reception class through to the end of Year 6, has been expertly designed. Teachers

deliver the curriculum exceedingly well. They choose highly appropriate activities to enable pupils to learn. They ensure that no pupil or child is left behind.

Teachers are adept in using assessment strategies to check that pupils are learning the content of the curriculum. Adults are quick to identify any misconceptions that pupils may have. Teachers skilfully ensure that pupils, and children in the early years, deepen their knowledge and understanding of different subjects, topics and concepts. Consequently, pupils and children in the early years flourish at Blackpool St Nicholas CofE Primary School.

Leaders successfully prioritise reading, which begins as soon as children enter the Reception Year. In the early years, children are keen to listen to songs and rhymes. There is a sense of excitement about reading. Older pupils enthusiastically talked to inspectors about a variety of different books and authors that they have learned about. Pupils understand the importance of reading to develop their vocabulary and comprehension skills.

Teachers are extremely well trained to deliver the phonics programme. They ensure that the books that pupils read match the sounds that they know. Teachers ensure that they are quick to identify any pupils who may be behind with their reading knowledge. Timely support helps these pupils to catch up quickly with their peers. By the end of key stage 2, pupils read fluently and accurately.

Leaders have set up effective systems to identify any children or pupils who may have SEND. Teachers use a wide range of appropriate strategies to support pupils, and children in the early years with SEND, to access learning. Where necessary, leaders work seamlessly with external agencies. Parents and carers are fully involved in this process. They are fully appreciative of the support that they receive. Leaders successfully support pupils with SEND to be as independent as possible in their learning and play.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is impeccable. Learning is not disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils, and children in the early years, have a thirst for learning. Inspectors found that they focus extremely well during lessons. A highly engaging and stimulating learning environment enables pupils to make excellent progress through the curriculum.

The programme of wider development has been expertly designed to meet pupils' learning needs. The comprehensive range of enrichment activities on offer ensures that pupils are well equipped for the next steps in their education. The personal development programme nurtures pupils' talents and enables them to become confident members of their school community. Pupils are fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils, including those with SEND, access a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, which broaden their horizons. They fully engage in clubs, community work, trips and visits. Pupils flourish in the outdoor learning opportunities that leaders provide. Leaders draw on the diversity of their local community to celebrate differences.

There is strong leadership right across this school. Staff feel well supported by leaders to manage their workload and well-being. Leaders and governors work effectively with all staff to develop a shared vision for the school. All leaders, staff and governors embrace the vision and implement it in full. As such, leaders have ensured that there is an excellent quality of education across all aspects of school life.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders in this school understand their responsibility for safeguarding pupils. There are highly effective processes in place to ensure that any potential concerns are identified, recorded and reviewed. All staff are well trained to identify any possible signs of abuse in pupils.

Leaders successfully work with a wide range of external agencies to support the health and well-being of pupils and their families. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils said that they are confident that there is an adult with whom they can talk should they have any worries. Parents told inspectors that they feel well supported by leaders and other staff.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in March 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.

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	119594
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	10226108
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	412
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stephen Dunstan
Headteacher	Claire Taylor
Website	www.st-nicholas-blackpool.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher and chair of governors are new in post since the last inspection.
- The last section 48 inspection of this school was on 3 March 2016.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- As part of this inspection, the inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: mathematics, early reading and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited some lessons, spoke with children and pupils, spoke with teachers, and looked at samples of children's and pupils' work. The inspector also looked at samples of work from other subjects

- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs team, subject leaders and teachers. The inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority and the Diocese of Blackburn.
- The inspector met with the chair of the governing body and other governors. She also considered the minutes of several governors' meetings.
- The inspector checked safeguarding procedures, including the recruitment checks made on staff. She met with the designated safeguarding leader, staff, children and pupils to discuss wider aspects of safeguarding. She scrutinised a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding. She also considered survey responses from staff, parents and carers, children and pupils around safeguarding.
- The inspector considered a range of documentation, including that relating to the curriculum, improvement plans and leaders' self-evaluation summary.
- The inspector observed children's and pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including in corridors, at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and in lessons. She also spoke to pupils about behaviour and bullying.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their programme of wider personal development.
- The inspector considered the responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments submitted via the free-text facility.
- The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and staff survey.

Inspection team

Elaine Mawson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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