

Inspection of school: St Michael With St John CofE Primary School

Swallow Drive, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 6LE

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 October 2022

Outcome

St Michael with St John CofE Primary continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and children in the early years, said that they are happy at school. They explained how they live out the school's motto to 'Nurture, Inspire and Achieve' through their everyday actions. They are confident to talk about their learning. Pupils and children strive to achieve well in all lessons. In most areas of the curriculum, pupils successfully develop a deep body of subject knowledge.

Pupils told the inspector that they make friends quickly. They explained how they have learned not to judge people but to get to know them as individuals. Pupils gain a wide knowledge of a variety of faiths and cultures. They care for one another and respect each other's differences. Pupils, and children in the early years, are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils thrive on the opportunities that they have to take on responsibilities. They talk enthusiastically about their smart school council, where everyone has a voice. The school's ethos and communication teams provide pupils with the opportunity to support each other every day.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils. They quickly address any potential instances of bullying. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The school is a calm and purposeful environment where pupils feel safe and able to learn.

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

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is ambitious and engaging, including in the early years. They have put considerable thought into the essential knowledge that pupils and children should learn and in what order. Leaders have designed the curriculum so that pupils have many opportunities to deepen their understanding of knowledge and concepts as they move up the school. Pupils regularly revisit prior learning.

The curriculum successfully allows pupils, and children in the early years, to develop their knowledge and skills over time. For example, pupils talked about the different procedures in mathematics that they have learned and that they can apply with increasing fluency. In the early years, teachers' creative thinking successfully introduces children to all that the curriculum has to offer. Children in the early years are well prepared for the demands of Year 1. Overall, pupils achieve well.

Teachers make effective use of assessment information to ensure that pupils have learned and remembered earlier curriculum content, including in the early years. They use this information well to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils and children.

Despite the overall strengths in the curriculum design and delivery, in a very small number of subjects, some teachers have gaps in their own subject knowledge. There are instances when this occasionally hinders pupils' achievement.

Leaders have ensured that reading is at the heart of the curriculum. The two libraries in the school provide pupils with a wealth of resources to support the development of their reading knowledge. Pupils talked passionately about their love of reading. They told the inspector that reading develops their understanding of the world and fires their imagination.

Skilled adults in the Reception Year ensure that children quickly gain confidence in early reading skills. Many children come to the school with English as an additional language. Well-planned guidance sessions for parents and carers allow them to understand how to support their child's acquisition of language.

The effective teaching of reading continues throughout key stage 1. Teachers quickly identify those pupils who are falling behind. They give pupils the timely help that they need to keep up with their reading. They make sure that the books that pupils read in school and at home match the sounds that they know. Pupils become established, fluent and enthusiastic readers by the end of key stage 2. As a result, pupils are able to access learning across the whole curriculum effectively.

Leaders quickly identify and respond to the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers support pupils with SEND to learn well across the curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND receive the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Behaviour in lessons is extremely positive. Pupils are polite, respectful and welcoming. They are able to learn free from distraction. Pupils attend school regularly.

Leaders provide pupils with a wealth of opportunity to develop a wider awareness of the world. Pupils recognise that they have a voice in the school. They learn to value diversity in their school community and in modern Britain. Pupils engage in a wide range of enrichment activities.

Leaders carefully monitor and manage staff workload and well-being. Staff work well together and morale is high. They feel valued and well supported by senior leaders.

Governors know the school well. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education that the school provides to pupils. Governors ensure that they keep themselves up to date with regular training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders understand the needs of their pupils and how to keep them safe. Staff are well trained and can spot if a pupil is at risk. They spoke confidently and consistently about how they would respond if they had concerns about a pupil.

Leaders ensure that pupils and their families access and receive the support that they need, including from specialist external services, when appropriate. Staff teach pupils well about risks they might face, for example when online and in the wider community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some curriculum areas, there are occasional gaps in teachers' subject knowledge. At times, this hampers their ability to teach aspects of the curriculum as effectively as they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the appropriate subject knowledge and expertise to deliver the curriculum consistently well.

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 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 good in November 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.

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	119356
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10212406
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	298
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bhawna Patel
Headteacher	Sarah Murphy
Website	www.smsjbwd.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school's last section 48 inspection took place in November 2015.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school closed its Nursery provision in August 2022.

Information about this inspection

- 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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. He also met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector heard pupils read.

- The inspector talked with pupils, visited the dining hall at lunchtime and observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders and checked how leaders record and respond to safeguarding concerns.
- The inspector checked the safeguarding policies and leaders' records of checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils. The inspector spoke to the headteacher, leaders and other staff about safeguarding procedures and training. The inspector also spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Iain Sim, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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