

Inspection of a good school: Milton St John's C of E Primary School

Mill Lane, Mossley, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire OL5 0BN

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 January 2023

Outcome

Milton St John's C of E Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe and happy at this welcoming school. They are proud to live up to the school's ethos, which includes showing respect and not giving up. Pupils feel cared for by the adults in the school. If bullying happens, leaders deal with it swiftly and effectively.

Pupils have a strong voice in the school. For example, teachers involve their pupils in developing a class charter which sets out the rules of the classroom. Pupils are motivated to live up to these rules because they helped to create them. Pupils' expectations of their own behaviour match the high expectations of their teachers.

Leaders want the best for every pupil. Leaders have ensured that pupils access a high-quality curriculum. This helps pupils to meet leaders' high expectations of their academic achievement.

Pupils are encouraged to support each other and celebrate everyone's achievements. For example, sport ambassadors identify their peers who are trying hard, then celebrate their success in assemblies. Older pupils also act as buddies to support children in the early years. These experiences help pupils to develop a sense of responsibility towards others.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have thought carefully about how the curriculum develops pupils' knowledge from the early years through to Year 6. This supports pupils to develop a rich body of knowledge that prepares them well for their future learning.

Leaders have very clearly defined the important information that pupils need to know, as well as when they should learn it. This helps teachers to design activities that effectively build on pupils' previous learning. As a result, pupils readily make connections between new information and what they have learned before.

Leaders ensure that teachers access training on the subjects that they teach. Consequently, teachers have strong subject knowledge, which they use to explain new concepts clearly.

Teachers use 'flashback' activities to regularly revisit learning. These assessment strategies help teachers to check that pupils remember important knowledge over time. Where teachers identify gaps in pupils' learning, they take swift and effective action to address them. This supports pupils to achieve well.

Leaders prioritise reading. They provide pupils with access to a range of high-quality texts. These texts are carefully selected to broaden pupils' understanding of the world beyond their local area. Older pupils are encouraged to read widely and to share their reading recommendations with their peers. Pupils like reading and spoke enthusiastically to the inspector about books that they have enjoyed.

Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme which children follow from the start of the Reception Year. Most staff deliver this effectively. Pupils read books which match the sounds that they know. This helps them to develop their phonics knowledge and become confident readers. Teachers swiftly identify pupils who have fallen behind. They provide appropriate support to help these pupils to catch up. However, a small number of staff are still learning how to deliver the new phonics programme. At times, these staff do not use the most appropriate strategies to support pupils to learn well. This slows some pupils' progress in becoming fluent readers.

Leaders are quick to identify children and pupils with SEND. Leaders provide teachers with a wealth of useful information about these pupils' needs. This information helps teachers to adapt the delivery of the curriculum effectively for these pupils. This enables pupils with SEND to access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Pupils are polite and respectful to adults and to each other. The atmosphere in the school is calm and purposeful. In lessons, pupils are eager to participate and they are attentive to their teachers. Learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders have developed an extensive programme to support pupils' wider development. They have thought carefully about what they want pupils to know. For example, pupils learn about diversity and online safety. Leaders have also considered the skills that will enable pupils to be successful members of society, such as developing pupils' independence skills. This starts in the early years, where children are taught to complete basic tasks for themselves, such as putting on shoes and coats. This continues through to Year 6, where pupils are prepared for a smooth transition to secondary school.

Governors are well informed about most aspects of the school. They challenge and support school leaders to continually enhance the education that leaders provide. Staff are happy at the school. They feel very well supported by leaders, who are responsive to any concerns that they raise.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders foster a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff receive training to ensure that they can identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. They are quick to report any concerns. Leaders know their pupils well and are proactive about securing help for those pupils and families who need it. Leaders persevere to make sure that external agencies provide appropriate additional support.

Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about water safety. Leaders ensure that this information is relevant to pupils' lives and their local community. Leaders are vigilant to emerging local concerns and adapt the information that pupils learn to address issues as they arise.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not implement the phonics programme exactly as leaders intend. This means that some pupils do not become fluent and confident readers as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure that these staff receive the training and support that they need to deliver the phonics programme with fidelity.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 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.

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	106234
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10241887
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Melissa Baker
Headteacher	Lisa Gallaher
Website	www.milton-st-johns.tameside.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Manchester. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in January 2018.
- School leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff.
- The inspector spoke with members of the local governing body.
- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and design technology. 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 listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- The inspector spoke to pupils about their experience of school. The inspector also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- The inspector checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including the school's single central record. The inspector met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in the school.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation documents, improvement plans and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Sally Rix, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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