

Inspection of a good school: St James' CofE Primary School, Birch-in-Rusholme

Cromwell Range, Birch-in-Rusholme, St James CofE Primary School, Manchester M14 6HW

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 January 2023

Outcome

St James' CofE Primary School, Birch-in-Rusholme continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have ensured that this is a welcoming school for pupils of all backgrounds. There is a great sense of togetherness. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. Pupils also explained how they value the friendships that they establish with their peers.

Leaders deal with any concerns that are raised by pupils quickly and effectively. This includes any incidents of bullying. Pupils said that they feel safe and happy in school.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in lessons. For example, they engage enthusiastically in the activities that teachers prepare for them. They equally enjoy singing in daily assemblies or participating in activities which promote their wider personal development.

Staff expect pupils to achieve well. Pupils convey a great sense of enjoyment when they learn and play together. They love to learn new information. Across the curriculum, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well.

Children in the early years also settle quickly to their learning. They benefit from clear routines. Children play safely and happily with each other. They are well prepared for the demands of Year 1.

Pupils engage in a variety of extra-curricular activities. They have plentiful opportunities to learn about different cultures and religions. Pupils value residential trips and visits.

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

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND, and those who speak English as an additional language. Leaders have established

the essential knowledge that pupils should learn from the early years through to Year 6. They have also ensured that new knowledge is delivered in a logical order.

The leadership of the curriculum is effective overall. Staff receive well-designed training about how the curriculum should be delivered. Subject leaders ensure ongoing improvements to the quality of education that pupils experience. In a few subjects, however, leaders do not check in sufficient detail how well pupils are learning the curriculum. Occasionally, this hampers how well some pupils achieve. Nevertheless, pupils, including those with SEND, learn well across most curriculum areas.

Teachers know their subjects well and they have secure subject knowledge. Teachers and support staff use clear explanations when talking to pupils about their work. In addition, teachers use assessment information well to identify any gaps in pupils' learning or to address pupils' misconceptions.

Children in the early years, including those in the Nursery class, are encouraged to develop their listening and communication skills. Overall, children in the early years achieve well.

Leaders inspire pupils to develop a love of reading. Pupils said that they read every day and enjoy taking books home to read with their parents. Children in the early years enjoy rhyming games and songs. The children in the Nursery class enjoy learning letters and sounds.

There is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics and reading in key stages 1 and 2. Pupils are well supported to develop fluency in reading. The books that pupils read are carefully matched to the sounds that they know. Those pupils who find reading more difficult receive timely and effective support. As a result, they catch up with their peers.

Leaders identify, assess and support pupils with SEND in a timely and efficient manner. Leaders make effective use of education, health and care (EHC) plans to support pupils with SEND. Staff are well trained to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. These pupils have access to the full curriculum and the full range of extra-curricular activities.

Pupils behave well and they have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils focus on the task at hand and low-level disruption is rare.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of enrichment activities, including sporting events. They visit the local library and places of historical interest. Pupils attend residential visits where they engage well in team building and outward-bound activities. The pupil parliament makes decisions about special themed days and which local charities pupils will support. Leaders have also ensured that there is an effective relationships and sex education and health education programme in place for pupils.

Governors have a strong oversight of the quality of education that pupils receive. They hold leaders fully to account. Staff feel well supported and they said that leaders are

cognisant of workload and well-being. Staff morale is very high. Parents are extremely supportive of the work of leaders and staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff, leaders and governors have received updated safeguarding training, which has included how to recognise potential safeguarding concerns. There are weekly staff meetings where safeguarding issues are discussed and followed up.

Leaders work well with other agencies, such as the police, when there might be potential concerns, for example about domestic abuse. Leaders provide appropriate and timely support to pupils and their families.

Governors maintain a keen oversight of the effectiveness of leaders' arrangements to safeguard pupils. Leaders keep fully up to date about any emerging local safeguarding issues.

Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe on the internet or when in the local community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders do not fully evaluate how well pupils are learning the curriculum. This hinders some pupils' achievement. Leaders should ensure that they have a full understanding of how well pupils are developing a deep and rich body of subject knowledge across all subjects.

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 March 2013.

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	105508
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10256022
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jess Kippen
Headteacher	Gavin Shortall
Website	www.stjamesmanchester.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary controlled Church of England primary school. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2019.
- The school has recently federated with St Philips Church of England Primary School.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken this into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and science. For each deep dive the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at samples of work, talked to pupils and held discussions with teachers. The inspector also discussed the wider curriculum with leaders.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff. The inspector held a discussion with four governors. He spoke with a

small group of parents. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.

- The inspector checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. He looked at a range of safeguarding documentation and he spoke to leaders, staff and pupils about the procedures for keeping pupils safe.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes. He spoke with pupils about their experiences at school.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils and Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector considered documentation shared by school leaders, including the school's self-evaluation form, school development plan, governing body reports, curriculum documents and pupils' EHC plans.

Inspection team

Jon Ashley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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