

# Inspection of Highfield St Matthew's Church of England Primary School

Billinge Road, Pemberton, Wigan, Lancashire WN3 6BL

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Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are proud members of this happy and harmonious school. They experience a wide range of interesting and engaging activities as part of the school's SHINE curriculum. Pupils enjoy spending time in the school's extensive grounds. One pupil reflected the views of many when they said, 'There is something here for everybody.'

Leaders have implemented a culture where only the best is good enough. They have created a learning environment that promotes and reflects the school's values and expectations. Pupils told inspectors that staff have inspired them to live up to leaders' high expectations, both in terms of their learning and conduct. Pupils behave well.

Pupils have a secure understanding of what bullying means. Leaders act decisively and promptly to resolve any reports of bullying or unkind behaviour. This helps pupils to feel safe and well cared for.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), experience a wide range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits. For example, they learn to cook, visit local museums and participate in residential visits.

Pupils are proud to take on a range of leadership roles, such as working as Highfield heroes and behaviour ambassadors.

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

Leaders and staff have thought deeply about the curriculum offer. The bespoke and ambitious curriculum has been developed to bring subjects to life and enrich pupils' learning. Pupils, including those with SEND, learn well.

Leaders have made sure that the important knowledge in every subject curriculum is carefully ordered, from the beginning of early years to the end of Year 6. This ensures that the new content that pupils learn builds on what they have learned before. In most subjects, this is evident in what pupils know and remember. However, in a very small number of subjects, pupils' knowledge of some aspects of their learning is not quite as secure. Pupils have had fewer opportunities to revisit and strengthen their learning in these subjects.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They make regular checks on pupils' learning. This helps teachers to identify and address pupils' misconceptions and to shape future teaching.

In the early years, leaders ensure that children have the best possible start to their life in school. The development of children's speech and language is at the heart of learning in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Staff have created a stimulating environment that sparks children's imagination and interest. Across the school, teachers plan activities that pupils enjoy.

Leaders are persistent in their ambition to make sure that every pupil develops into a fluent reader. This starts in the early years, where children enjoy listening to and learning nursery rhymes and songs.

Staff appreciate the ongoing training and support provided by leaders. This helps them to teach the early reading programme well. Early readers use the sounds that they know to read books with increasing fluency. Teachers are quick to provide help for any pupil who is not keeping up with the pace of the phonics programme.

Leaders and staff have created attractive and inviting reading areas to encourage pupils to read and share books with each other. Pupils are positive about reading. They spoke knowledgeably about the high-quality books that their teachers have shared with them. Older pupils read well, with expression and confidence.

Leaders have the highest ambitions for pupils with SEND. Staff identify pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. Leaders ensure that teachers give these pupils extra support. Staff use effective strategies to make sure that pupils with SEND access the same learning as their peers.

Pupils know that it is important to follow the school's rules of ready, respectful and safe. They work hard and enjoy their lessons. Pupils said that their classmates rarely interrupt their learning. The youngest children show positive attitudes to learning. They listen keenly to their teachers.

Pupils, parents and carers appreciate the range of activities, beyond the academic curriculum, that leaders provide. For example, pupils take part in a wide variety of musical, sporting and other activities. They enjoy attending after-school clubs.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their character and to be responsible and active citizens. For instance, pupils enjoy raising money for various charitable causes. They spoke very proudly about planting trees in the school's remembrance garden to mark the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. Pupils show respect for each other and their teachers.

Trust leaders and governors have been very much part of the school's journey of improvement. They have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their support and challenge have led to sustainable change and improved outcomes for pupils. Staff said that leaders consider their well-being and workload when making decisions. Staff are proud to work at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors are knowledgeable about their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff are highly tenacious in their approach to keeping children safe. They know pupils and their families very well.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular safeguarding training. This means that staff are very vigilant. They are quick to spot any changes in pupils' behaviour. Staff alert leaders to any concerns that they may have. Leaders work effectively with a range of external providers and agencies to keep pupils safe.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn about staying safe, for example fire safety, how to stay safe online and the importance of healthy relationships.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a very small number of subjects, pupils' knowledge and skills are not as secure as in other subjects. This is because these curriculums are not as well embedded and pupils have had less opportunity to secure their learning. Leaders should ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to revisit and strengthen their learning in these subjects.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145713
<b>Local authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255932
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	428
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of Trustees</b>	Canon Margaret Swinson
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Joy Sicilia Oliveros
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Barron
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.highfieldsaintmatthews.wigan.sch.uk">www.highfieldsaintmatthews.wigan.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has become part of the Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust.
- Highfield St Matthew's Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy school in November 2018. When its predecessor school, Highfield St Matthew's CofE Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be requires improvement.
- The predecessor school, Highfield St Matthew's CofE Primary School, had its last section 48 inspection in April 2016.
- Leaders do not currently make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- Leaders provide a breakfast club and an after-school club.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff in school. They spoke with governors, including the chair of the local governing board. They also spoke with the chief executive officer and a trustee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography and art and design. They spoke with the curriculum leaders of these subject areas. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. An inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also spoke with leaders from other areas of the curriculum. They looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils. They also visited some lessons.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors evaluated leaders' safeguarding arrangements and scrutinised leaders' self-evaluation documents and leaders' improvement plans.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

## Inspection team

Louise McArdle, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Julie Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Victoria Burnside	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
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