

# Inspection of a good school: Rectory CofE Primary School

Rectory Road, North Ashton, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, Lancashire WN4 0QF

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Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy coming to school. They like to spend time with their friends. They eagerly welcome new pupils into the school and help them to settle in quickly. Pupils, including children in the early years, are happy in their work and play.

Pupils feel safe in school. They appreciate the time that staff take to get to know them as individuals. Pupils are confident that adults will help them if they have any worries. Leaders deal with bullying and name-calling effectively.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and respectful to adults and each other.

Pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND join in with all aspects of school life. Pupils across the school enjoy the range of after-school clubs and activities that staff provide. Older pupils are proud of their leadership responsibilities.

Previously, pupils, including those with SEND, have not achieved well. Recent improvements to the curriculum are benefiting most pupils. Staff also have higher expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. However, some pupils have gaps in their learning because of the previous weaknesses in the quality of education.

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

Leaders are in the process of transforming the school's curriculum. Leaders have prioritised the development of the English and mathematics curriculums to make them more ambitious and to ensure that pupils learn more knowledge. This is because, previously, pupils did not achieve well in these subjects. However, while leaders' improvements to the curriculum are well on their way in English and mathematics, they are only part way through the process in other subjects.

Leaders are successfully prioritising training and support for teachers. This will ensure that teachers can deliver the new subject curriculums increasingly well. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved. They are more confident and competent in devising appropriate lesson activities to deliver new content.

Teachers are ensuring that there are more frequent opportunities for pupils to recap and recall previous learning. This is helping to address misconceptions as they arise. Nevertheless, some pupils have gaps in their subject knowledge as a result of the previous curriculum. These pupils struggle with new learning, as they do not have secure foundations on which to build new knowledge. Furthermore, while some teachers are adept at identifying these gaps, others are less skilled in using leaders' assessment systems. This means that some pupils continue to underachieve across the breadth of the curriculum.

In the main, leaders now prioritise reading. In Nursery, children successfully begin to learn letters and sounds. Children successfully start on the phonics programme from the beginning of the Reception Year. Leaders have also ensured that many teaching staff have had the training and support required to deliver the phonics programme competently and confidently.

Teachers ensure that pupils read books that match the sounds they have learned. Teachers quickly identify pupils who struggle to keep up with their reading. They put appropriate support in place so that these pupils catch up with their peers. While pupils in the early years and in key stage 1 get off to a stronger start in learning to read, some older pupils have gaps in their phonic knowledge. This is due to the legacy of weak phonic teaching. This hampers how well these older pupils read and write in the different curriculum subjects in key stage 2.

Teachers have adapted the phonic programme for those pupils in the specially resourced provision who are ready to learn to read. However, some staff who work with these pupils have not had the training they require. This means that they do not support these pupils as well as they could.

Leaders appropriately identify and assess pupils with SEND. Teachers successfully adapt the curriculum, and lesson activities, for those pupils with SEND in the main school. This ensures that pupils with SEND learn alongside their peers. Leaders work well with external partners to access specialist advice and support for pupils with SEND. While some of the pupils in the specially resourced provision access the subject curriculums alongside their mainstream peers, other pupils have more complex needs and different starting points. The school's curriculum does not fully meet the needs and aptitudes of

this group of pupils. This hampers their progress. Nevertheless, leaders are in the process of designing a new curriculum for the individual learning needs of pupils with SEND.

Pupils' behaviour has improved. The school is generally calm and orderly. Most of the time, pupils can get on with their work without distractions. Children in the early years also listen carefully to their teachers. They take turns and share resources well. However, across the school, some pupils with SEND find managing their behaviour more difficult. Teaching staff skilfully work with these pupils to find strategies that help them. This enables pupils with SEND to learn and play more successfully alongside their peers.

Pupils are proud to represent the school in sports matches and tournaments. Pupils learn to play musical instruments. Recently, older pupils have learned what they need to do in an emergency, including how to contact the police, fire and ambulance services. Pupils were fascinated by a recent talk by a local resident who is a mountaineer. However, leaders have not thought clearly about the full breadth of the programme for pupils' wider personal development. For example, some aspects of the school's personal development provision, such as road safety, are ad hoc. This means that pupils are not as well prepared as they should be for some aspects of life in modern Britain.

The governing body is knowledgeable about the school. Governors are mindful of the turbulence in leadership and staffing and its impact on the school's performance. They provide effective support and challenge to leaders to make the improvements needed.

Teaching staff comment that leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being. They have found the considerable changes, including the implementation of new subject curriculums, demanding. However, they acknowledge the positive differences that these changes are making for both pupils and staff. They enjoy working at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular safeguarding training. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities. They know the signs that indicate that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff are mindful of the additional vulnerabilities of pupils with SEND. Staff report and record concerns appropriately. Leaders follow up on these concerns promptly.

Leaders work well with external partners so that pupils and their families can access the timely help and support they need.

Pupils understand how to stay safe online and how to report any concerns they may have.

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

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

- The curriculum for some pupils in the specially resourced provision does not fully match their learning needs. This includes how well some staff deliver the phonics programme to those pupils who are ready to learn to read. As a result, a few of these pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that they finalise a suitable curriculum to enable these pupils to achieve consistently well. They should train staff in the specially resourced provision to deliver the phonics programme consistently well.
- Some pupils have gaps in their learning. This hampers how well these pupils achieve across the curriculum. This is because these pupils do not have secure enough foundations on which to build new learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers use appropriate assessment systems to check pupils' prior knowledge. This is to address deficits in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- In some subjects, leaders have not finalised their curriculum thinking. This prevents pupils from achieving well across subjects. Leaders should ensure that they finalise the curriculum across all subjects.
- The programme for pupils' wider personal development is not sufficiently well thought out in some key areas. Pupils do not receive the breadth of offer to enable them to flourish in modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that the school's programme of personal development is sufficiently well designed so that pupils benefit from a wide and rich set of experiences that prepares them well for life.

## 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 June 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104797
<b>Local authority</b>	St Helens
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240706
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	162
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Nicola Phythian
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Brook
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.rectorycoeprimaryschool.co.uk">www.rectorycoeprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 and 28 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This is a Church of England primary school in the Diocese of Liverpool. The most recent section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character took place in March 2017.
- The school has a specially resourced provision. This provision is designated for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. A few pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The local authority commissions the places at this specially resourced provision. This provision caters for 32 pupils. There are currently 25 pupils on roll. These pupils are in the early years foundation stage, key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The governing body operates a breakfast club and after-school provision.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.

## 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 this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector completed deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and design and technology. As part of the deep dives, the inspector met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, met with teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- The inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority. The inspector was unable to meet with a representative of the Diocese of Liverpool.
- The inspector checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. She reviewed a range of documentation and spoke to leaders and staff. The inspector also spoke to pupils about whether they felt safe in school.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times. She spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. The inspector also considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector spoke with parents and carers. She considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.

## **Inspection team**

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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