

# Inspection of a good school: Christ Church C of E VA Junior School, Sowerby Bridge

Park Road, Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire HX6 2BJ

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Inspection date:

1 March 2023

## Outcome

Christ Church C of E VA Junior School, Sowerby Bridge continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Christ Church Junior School 'grow in faith, learning and love'. They are taught about how to become caring, responsible and respectful members of their school community. Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, both academically and personally. The school is a happy, calm and purposeful learning environment where pupils flourish.

Pupils respond well to the high expectations of staff. They behave well in lessons and conduct themselves respectfully around school. Staff help pupils to reflect on their actions. Pupils learn to resolve issues, such as falling out with their friends. Bullying rarely happens, but when incidents occur staff deal with them quickly. Pupils are safe and feel safe in school.

The school's Christian values permeate through all aspects of school life. Close links with the local church support pupils' personal development well. Leaders plan a variety of activities, visits and visitors that broaden pupils' experiences.

Parents and carers speak highly of the school. One parent summed up the views of many, 'It is a wonderful school, with the children at the heart of everything they do. My child loves her time at this school. The teachers are all welcoming, approachable and very understanding.'

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. It helps pupils make connections between their learning in different subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 learn about the role of women during the Second World War in history and then use this knowledge when they learn about gender inequality around the world. As a result, pupils develop a detailed knowledge in most subjects and learn well.

Reading underpins the whole curriculum. Leaders introduced a new phonics programme last year to support all pupils with their reading, including those pupils who have struggled to learn to read. This includes identifying gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge and providing individual support where required. Staff support the weakest readers well to catch up with their peers. Pupils enjoy listening to the class texts, which are selected to support a theme in the curriculum. Books that pupils read are closely matched to their reading abilities. Teachers promote a love of reading through the English curriculum, daily reading sessions and story times. As a result, pupils love to read and achieve well.

Leaders have considered the English curriculum carefully. Texts are linked to what pupils learn in other subjects. There is a clear focus on vocabulary and language development. However, leaders have not broken down precisely enough the key knowledge and skills pupils need to learn to achieve the different end goals.

The mathematics curriculum is well planned. Pupils have opportunities to practise their mathematical skills until they become confident. Teachers check often whether pupils have remembered previous learning. If pupils struggle, extra support is put in place to help them catch up.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs accurately identified. They follow the same curriculum as their peers. Staff provide effective support for pupils and their families. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils are focused, engaged and enthusiastic in lessons. They are kind and helpful to each other. The culture of 'good to be green' allows pupils to have a fresh start when they make poor choices.

Throughout the curriculum, leaders have identified opportunities to promote pupils' broader development. These include visits to local places of interest and outdoor learning days. Pupils enjoy these cultural experiences. Pupils can attend a wide range of clubs that help to extend learning beyond the school day, including choir, film club, book club and art club. Pupils can apply to become a member of the school council or eco council, become a junior leader or lead collective worship sessions as a prayer leader. Pupils learn about Christianity and have an in-depth knowledge of Christian values. However, some pupils do not have a detailed knowledge of other faiths and cultures.

Governors know the school well and provide appropriate challenge and support for leaders. Leaders make sure that staff workload is manageable. Staff are very positive about working in the school. They are well supported and say that they 'are lucky to work in this school'.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture where all staff and governors know their role in keeping

children safe. Staff receive appropriate training that takes into consideration any local risks. They know exactly what signs of concern to look out for. Leaders follow up referrals without delay. They work well with external agencies to ensure that pupils get the help they need quickly. The curriculum helps pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils learn about online safety, fire safety and road safety. They are also taught about healthy relationships and personal boundaries.

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

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

- Although the overall sequencing of the English curriculum has been carefully considered, leaders have not ensured that the key knowledge that pupils need to learn is broken down sufficiently enough. As a result, teachers work out for themselves what pupils need to know in order to reach the end points that are outlined. This can lead to inconsistency. Leaders should ensure that the English curriculum outlines clearly what information teachers want pupils to learn.
- Although pupils learn about different faiths and cultures, their experiences of faiths other than Christianity are less well developed. As a result, pupils do not have a secure knowledge of different faiths and cultures. Leaders should ensure that pupils' experiences of different faiths and cultures are further enhanced.

## **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 December 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	107554
<b>Local authority</b>	Calderdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255811
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	104
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rebecca Lumb
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Embleton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.christchurchjuniors.org.uk">https://www.christchurchjuniors.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Christ Church C of E Junior School, Sowerby Bridge is voluntary aided and is part of the Diocese of Leeds.
- The most recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools section 48 inspection took place in June 2022.
- Since September 2022, the headteacher is also executive headteacher of Tuel Lane Infant School and Nursery.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- 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, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, subject leaders, the designated safeguarding lead

and other members of staff. Inspectors met with two governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with curriculum leaders, spoke to pupils and teachers, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. The inspectors heard some pupils read.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plans, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding files and recruitment checks.
- The inspectors talked to staff about their role in keeping pupils safe. They also talked to staff about workload, and about the amount and quality of training and support they receive from leaders. The lead inspector also met with the headteacher to discuss the wider development of pupils, behaviour and the well-being of staff.
- Inspectors spoke with parents during the inspection. They considered responses, including free-text comments, to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire. The responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires were also considered.

### **Inspection team**

Dimitris Spiliotis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Pritiben Patel

Ofsted Inspector

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