

Inspection of a good school: St John's Church of England Primary School, Abram

Simpkin Street, Abram, Wigan, Lancashire WN2 5QE

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

St John's Church of England Primary School, Abram continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

A deep commitment by staff and leaders to pupils achieving everything they are capable of lies at the centre of St John's Primary. Staff want the very best for their pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils strive to reach these expectations. Across different subjects, pupils achieve well over time. They are prepared well for the next stage in their education.

Pupils enjoy the welcoming and nurturing environment that has been established by leaders. They speak positively about their school and are proud to be a part of it. The curriculum excites pupils and stimulates their curiosity. They are happy to be in school learning new things. For example, children in early years were fascinated to have some insects visit their class. Pupils particularly enjoy spending time in the Peace Garden, where they get the opportunity to reflect or chat quietly with their friends.

Leaders and staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Staff and pupils have warm, caring relationships. Pupils like to award each other the Learning Legend award each week. Pupils know who to turn to if they need helping out with any worries that they have. This helps them feel safe in school. Pupils show respect to all. If any bullying occurs, it is dealt with successfully by leaders.

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

The school's 'Dream' curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with SEND. Leaders identify the key knowledge that they wish pupils to learn in the different subjects and themes that pupils study. From the early years, pupils encounter learning that is presented in a logical order. In most cases, pupils build up their knowledge over time. That said, the school's curriculum is still relatively new. Some pupils have not had sufficient opportunities to revisit learning enough in a few subjects. This means they cannot always make links between different subjects or themes that they have studied.

Teachers usually use the school's curriculum to design lessons that help pupils learn what they need to know. Teachers make careful checks in these lessons to see how well pupils are learning. When needed, they provide extra support to pupils. However, in one or two subjects, the activities that teachers provide for pupils do not fully promote the learning that was intended. This hinders how well pupils learn in these subjects.

Leaders identify pupils with SEND quickly. They use clear systems to spot what their needs are. Staff provide effective support within lessons to make sure that pupils with SEND can study the same curriculum as their classmates. Pupils with SEND achieve well across a range of curriculum areas.

Reading is central to the school's curriculum. Leaders have invested heavily in making the school a literature-rich environment. Pupils talk enthusiastically about books that they read in school or at home. Children in the early years get off to a flying start with their phonics. They begin to learn the sounds that they need to be able to read. Staff are well trained to support pupils' reading as they move through the school. Pupils encounter sounds in the order they need to. This includes in the books that they read. Staff make sure that pupils are secure in those sounds before moving them on. This means that pupils are becoming confident, fluent readers.

Children in early years learn how to become confident learners. They concentrate well on the task in hand. Throughout school, pupils follow the rules set out by staff well. They move around the school sensibly. Classrooms are a hive of activity. In lessons, pupils work hard and show positive attitudes to their learning. This means that pupils learn without any interruptions.

Pupils learn about the need to be tolerant and respectful to everyone. This is clear in the attitudes they display in school. Pupils understand British values. For example, pupils' understanding of democracy is enhanced by getting the opportunity to visit a 'polling station' set up in school. Pupils develop their understanding of different religions and faiths. They know that families are made up in many ways. Pupils learn about different ways to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. Pupils take their leadership responsibilities seriously. They are proud to be members of the different councils, such as the pupil board, school council or eco council. Pupils get many opportunities to extend their understanding of topics they have studied outside the classroom.

Trustees, governors and leaders understand the school well. They identify the correct priorities to ensure that the school continues to improve. Trustees and governors challenge leaders on the performance of pupils. Staff feel valued. They appreciate the open, supportive culture that leaders have established. Staff feel that leaders support them well with their workload and well-being. This creates a strong team spirit in school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders ensure that safeguarding is at the forefront of everyone's mind. Staff are well trained and they understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Everyone is vigilant in looking for any signs that pupils might be at risk. They know their pupils and families well. Any concerns are reported quickly to leaders. When needed, leaders make timely and appropriate referrals to external agencies to support their pupils in staying safe.

Pupils are taught about how they can keep themselves safe. This includes learning about using the internet and apps safely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have introduced a new curriculum which has not been fully embedded yet. This means that some pupils have not had enough opportunities to build up their knowledge over time. Leaders should embed the curriculum to ensure that pupils get the opportunities they need to build up their learning over time so that they know more and remember more.
- In one or two subjects, teachers sometimes do not provide pupils with activities that promote the learning that was intended to take place. This results in missed opportunities to reinforce the key knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. Leaders should ensure that teachers plan activities which successfully support pupils' learning in these final few 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 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

Unique reference number	141641
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10256122
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	277
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Crispin Pailing
Principal	Laura James
Website	www.abramsaintjohns.wigan.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provider.
- The school is part of the Quest Academy Trust.
- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Liverpool. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 on 26 January 2017.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the principal and other senior leaders. He met with a range of leaders who are responsible for pupil welfare and personal development programmes.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils and looked at pupils' work.

- The inspector met with one director, members of the local governing board, including the chair of the local governing board, a representative from the Diocese of Liverpool and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed some pupils in Years 1 to 3 reading to familiar adults.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes, and as they moved around the school. He scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. The inspector reviewed leaders' policies and procedures to keep pupils safe. The inspector discussed safeguarding arrangements with leaders and staff.
- The inspector took account of the responses of Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils. He spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023