

Inspection of a good school: St John with St Michael Church of England Primary School

Moss Side Street, Shawforth, Rochdale, Lancashire OL12 8EP

Inspection date: 28 March 2023

Outcome

St John with St Michael Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years, feel safe and happy in this friendly school. They comment that they enjoy coming to school. Pupils get on well with their classmates and teachers. If fallouts or instances of bullying occur, leaders make sure they are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Leaders expect pupils to live up to the school's LIGHT values, which includes love, generosity and togetherness. Pupils are proud of the work they have done to create attractive displays that remind everyone of these values. Their good behaviour matches their teachers' high expectations. As a result, learning around school proceeds with few interruptions.

Leaders want all pupils to do well. They have developed a broad and balanced curriculum. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well during their time at the school.

Pupils enjoy taking on various roles and responsibilities, such as being members of the 'pupil parliament'. They also relish having the chance to represent their school in local sports competitions, including football and table tennis.

Pupils take advantage of the variety of enrichment activities on offer. They like attending after-school clubs, going on school trips and taking part in residential visits. Pupils also enjoy playing their part in community events, such as making links with a local care home.

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

Leaders have ensured that phonics and reading have a high priority across the school. Children in early years start by developing their awareness of different sounds. They build on this good start in daily phonics sessions in Reception and key stage 1. Staff keep a careful check on pupils' progress. They make sure that any pupils who are falling behind get the help they need to catch up. Older pupils continue to enjoy reading. They are particularly enthusiastic about the rewards they receive for reading regularly at home. Pupils also appreciate the good selection of books available to them in the recently refurbished school library.

Leaders have developed a broad and engaging curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. The curriculum in the early years is well thought out, and leaders have ensured that it links well with pupils' learning in key stage 1. In most subjects, including mathematics and history, leaders have ensured that pupils build their knowledge in a series of well-planned steps. Leaders have placed a high priority on staff training, and this has ensured that staff have developed the knowledge and confidence to deliver the curriculum effectively.

However, in a small number of subjects, leaders have not picked out the detailed knowledge they want pupils to learn and the order in which this should be learned. Some older pupils also have gaps in their knowledge where their previous learning has been less effective. In these instances, pupils' learning is less secure because they are not building up their knowledge consistently.

Leaders are quick to pick up on the additional needs of pupils with SEND, including in the early years. Staff make sensible adaptations to the work set for these pupils and support them well in class. This helps pupils with SEND to access the same broad curriculum as their peers.

The atmosphere in school is calm and purposeful. Pupils typically behave well throughout the day. If any do become distracted, staff quickly help them to refocus. Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes make a positive contribution to learning across the school. Lessons proceed with little disruption. In the early years, children work and play well together, both inside and in the large outdoor area.

Leaders provide a good range of activities to support pupils' well-being and their personal development. Pupils are very positive about the wide variety of lunchtime and after-school activities that are available. Leaders have recognised the importance of developing pupils' awareness of diversity in modern Britain. For example, they have been careful to ensure that books in the library represent the broad spectrum of society. Pupils have a good understanding of equality and respect everyone's right to be themselves.

Trustees and members of the local advisory board know the school well and are ambitious for its future. Staff are very positive about working at the school. They comment that leaders take staff workload and well-being into account when making decisions. Teachers in the early stage of their careers say that they feel well supported by both the school and trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture at the school. Staff are vigilant in looking out for potential safeguarding issues. They are quick to report any concerns that they have, and these are carefully recorded. Leaders act promptly if such concerns are reported. They work well with external agencies to secure the support that pupils and families may need.

Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe through the wider curriculum, such as how to behave safely when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not set out the precise content they want pupils to learn or the order in which this content should be learned. In these subjects, pupils' learning is less secure. Leaders need to ensure that their curriculum thinking in these subjects provides staff with the same clear guidance that is in place in other areas of the curriculum, ensuring that pupils are better able to learn and remember more of what they are taught.
- In some subjects, older pupils' learning is hindered by gaps in their knowledge. This is because weaknesses in their previous learning have not allowed them to know more and remember more of the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that staff use assessment strategies effectively to better identify and address these gaps in pupils' previous knowledge so that pupils are building new learning on more secure footing.

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 predecessor school, St John with St Michael Church of England Primary School, Shawforth, to be good in May 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

Unique reference number	148745
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10275144
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	106
Appropriate authority	Board of Trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Bond
Headteacher	Steven Rooney
Website	www.sjism.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Manchester. The last section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character of the predecessor school took place in February 2019.
- The school is part of the Forward As One Academy Trust.
- Leaders do not make use of 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 held discussions with the headteacher and other leaders and staff.
- An inspector spoke to trustees, members of the local advisory board, the CEO of the trust and a representative of the diocese.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at examples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about other areas of the curriculum.
- Inspectors made checks on leaders' records for safeguarding and staff recruitment and spoke to staff about the procedures for safeguarding pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including a number of free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Neil Dixon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Cleo Cunningham

Ofsted Inspector

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