

Inspection of a good school: St Chad's Church of England (C) Primary School

The Gateway, Redstreet Village, Newcastle, Staffordshire ST5 7AB

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 May 2023

Outcome

St Chad's Church of England (C) Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Chad's Church of England Primary School is a warm and welcoming place. The school motto of 'Growing hearts and minds' is central to school life. Pupils love school, and parents and carers agree. One parent was typical of many when they commented, 'St Chad's has blossomed over the last two years under the new leadership. The children and their learning are the utmost priority in every situation.' Staff know pupils very well, and relationships between staff and pupils are positive. There are high expectations for all and a strong sense of community and mutual respect.

Pupils are polite and courteous and have positive attitudes towards learning. They understand what bullying is. They say that although it is extremely rare, they are confident that adults would deal with it were it to happen.

The school is a place where pupils cooperate and value each other. It is an inclusive environment where pupils respect each other's differences. One pupil summed up the views of many when they said, 'We don't treat people differently, we treat them with respect.'

Pupils enjoy a wide range of after-school clubs, such as for netball, science and choir. They also have the opportunity to learn musical instruments, such as the violin and flute.

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

Leaders, staff and governors have a clear vision for the school. They want pupils to achieve well. This includes those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have created a purposeful environment in which pupils are keen to learn. The curriculum is broad and balanced and ensures that pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Leaders have carefully structured the curriculum to build up pupils' knowledge and vocabulary over time. Staff have the knowledge they need to teach the curriculum well.

Leaders have established effective teaching routines that allow pupils to know and remember more. This starts in early years. For example, children begin to understand programming in computing by following instructions given by teachers and then following a simple map on a treasure hunt. However, in a small number of subjects, the curriculum has been recently revised. Pupils' understanding in these subjects is less secure. Leaders have not had the opportunity to assess the impact of these curriculums.

Pupils who are learning to read benefit from an effective daily phonics programme. Leaders have ensured that all staff know how to teach phonics well. Pupils regularly practise reading the letters and sounds that they have learned in books that are well matched to their ability. This helps pupils to remember their phonic knowledge and apply it when they encounter unfamiliar words. Staff provide extra support to pupils who need it. As a result, most pupils are fluent readers by the time they enter Year 3. Those who are not fluent continue to receive daily phonics lessons. As a result, they become better readers over time. Pupils develop a love of reading. They are read to daily by staff and visiting 'mystery readers'. Staff select 'super six' books that engage pupils in the curriculum, using both fiction and non-fiction texts.

Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. They check on pupils' learning and provide additional support to those pupils who need it. Pupils with SEND are well supported to access the same curriculum as other pupils. Their needs are identified early, and parents are actively involved in discussions about their progress. Pupils behave well in class and around school.

Provision for pupils' personal development is a strength. There is a clear focus on the school's values of kindness, hope, forgiveness and community. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Activities such as visits to Chester and a local coal mine help pupils to learn the curriculum. Pupils write letters of kindness to the local community on St Chad's Day, sending them 'good vibes'. Opportunities such as sitting on the eco-council or being a playground buddy or school councillor allow pupils to take on responsibilities. In doing so, they develop confidence and communication skills. They say that they are 'making our school a better place, showing the democracy of our school'. The school rules help pupils to understand right and wrong and how to improve their behaviour if necessary.

Governors share leaders' high aspirations. However, the governing body has recently undergone several changes. Therefore, it does not have a sufficiently detailed understanding of the school's curriculum to enable it to fully challenge and hold leaders to account in this respect.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. There is a strong culture of safeguarding, and effective systems are in place to keep pupils safe. Staff receive regular and appropriate training, which ensures that they can identify any problems that pupils may face. Safeguarding records are thorough and well maintained. Strong communication

ensures that staff share concerns swiftly. Leaders make sure that pupils develop the knowledge that they need to keep themselves safe, including when online or cycling. Leaders work closely with pupils and families who need extra help and support. They also work with any relevant agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject curriculums have recently been revised. In these subjects, the curriculum is not as advanced as it is in other subjects, and pupils have not learned as much as they could. Leaders should support subject leaders to embed these revised curriculum plans.
- Over the last few months, there have been significant changes to the governance of the school. Some governors are new to their role. As a result, governors are still developing a secure understanding of the effectiveness of the school's curriculum. Governors should continue to develop their role so that they hold leaders fully to account for the school's performance across the curriculum.

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 March 2018.

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	124265
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10282692
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Zoe Comley
Headteacher	Joanne Brennan
Website	www.st-chads-newcastle.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is in the Diocese of Lichfield. Its most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in June 2019. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 restrictions. They restarted in September 2021. The school's next section 48 inspection will take place within five years of the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher and four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector held telephone conversations with representatives of the diocese and the local authority. He also spoke to parents and carers at the end of the school day.

- The inspector viewed a range of safeguarding documentation. He examined checks on safer recruitment and spoke with members of staff to check their safeguarding knowledge.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and computing. He met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and viewed examples of pupils' work. The inspector also spoke with pupils about their learning.
- The inspector observed children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 reading to a trusted adult.
- The inspector spoke with members of staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- The inspector considered the responses, including the free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View. He also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Barry Yeardsley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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