

Inspection of a good school: Ss John Fisher and Thomas More Catholic Primary School

Woodhouse Lane, Benchill, Manchester, Greater Manchester M22 9NW

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 June 2023

Outcome

Ss John Fisher and Thomas More Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff share the same high expectations for pupils' behaviour and achievement. Pupils are proud to attend this school. They work hard and try their best. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils' behaviour around the school is calm. Older pupils support younger children in the playground. They play happily together during social times. Pupils welcome visitors readily and enjoy talking about their school experience.

Staff cater well for pupils' emotional well-being. For example, pupils value the help that they receive through the 'Talk Team'. As a result, pupils are reassured that they have someone they can talk to in school.

Pupils benefit from exciting trips, such as visits to farms, beaches and the Lake District. Pupils in Year 6 spoke enthusiastically about their recent performance of 'Macbeth' at a literary festival. Children and pupils in the nurture room enjoy caring for Arlo, the school therapy dog.

Within this diverse community, there is an understanding and an appreciation of difference. Pupils display kindness to one another. Leaders do not tolerate bullying. They take effective action when it happens. This helps pupils to feel safe in school.

Leaders help to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. For instance, pupils take part in democratic election processes to act as the head boy or girl, and to be representatives of the school parliament. Pupils take these leadership roles seriously, and they are well respected by their peers.

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

Leaders have created a suitably broad and ambitious curriculum, which begins in the provision for two-year-olds. Children in the early years get off to a strong start. They learn the curriculum successfully, and this prepares them well for key stage 1.

In most subjects, leaders have identified the essential knowledge that pupils should learn, and they have considered carefully the order in which it is taught by teachers. In these subjects, pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well. However, in a small number of subjects, some teachers are less clear about what they should teach and when this content should be delivered. This hinders some pupils from building on their prior learning and developing a rich understanding of the subject.

Leaders ensure that staff are supported well to deliver curriculums with confidence. In the main, teachers use their expertise to deliver information clearly. They make appropriate activity choices and use resources skilfully to support pupils to learn the intended curriculum.

Teachers check regularly on what pupils know and can do. For the most part, staff address pupils' misconceptions swiftly. Nonetheless, in a small number of subjects, teachers do not check carefully enough what pupils can recall of the intended curriculum. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their learning, and this prevents them from building securely on what they have learned previously.

Leaders have placed reading at the front and centre of their priorities. In the Nursery class, children enjoy acting out their favourite stories. Pupils in key stage 2 read voraciously. This contributes well to the development of pupils' vocabulary and supports their learning across the curriculum.

Early reading is a strength. In the Nursery class, children begin to recognise sounds. Staff ensure that the books pupils read are closely matched to the sounds that they have learned. Leaders ensure that staff are equipped well to deliver the phonics programme. They are quick to identify any pupils who are struggling with reading. Staff provide the right support for these pupils so that they can catch up quickly. As a result, pupils get off to a flying start on their reading journey.

Leaders and staff manage pupils' behaviour well. Teachers are skilled in preventing low-level disruption. As a result, learning in the classroom is seldom disturbed.

Leaders have clear systems in place to accurately identify any additional needs that pupils, including children in the early years, may have. Teachers are equipped well to adapt how they deliver the curriculum for pupils with SEND. This helps this group of pupils to learn well alongside their peers. Parents and carers of pupils with SEND are positive about the support that their children receive from staff.

Pupils, including children in the provision for two-year-olds, benefit from leaders' carefully considered activities to enhance their wider development. For example, a local dentist visited the school recently to talk to pupils about the importance of dental hygiene. Pupils

learn about putting others first. For example, the 'Mini Vinnies' are keen to help residents of the local community. Pupils can apply for a 'job' to help in the school office at breaktimes. They relish these opportunities. Furthermore, it helps to equip them for the world of work.

Staff told the inspector that they are happy to work at the school. They appreciate leaders' focus on supporting staff to look after their well-being.

Governors are suitably informed about leaders' priorities. Those responsible for governance support leaders well to drive forward improvements. They also offer an appropriate level of challenge to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a sharp understanding of the local issues that may affect pupils and their families. They have created a culture where everyone understands their safeguarding responsibilities.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular and up-to-date training. This ensures that staff are alert to the signs of potential harm in pupils. Staff follow leaders' procedures diligently and report any concerns promptly. Leaders are swift to follow them up. When needed, they work collaboratively with external agencies. Leaders ensure that pupils receive the help that they need.

Pupils learn about stranger danger and the importance of keeping safe online.

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 identified the essential knowledge that pupils should learn. In these subjects, some pupils are hindered in developing a deep body of knowledge that allows them to make secure connections in their learning. Leaders should ensure that the essential knowledge that staff should deliver is identified and sequenced appropriately so that pupils can build on what they already know.
- In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment strategies as well as they could to check what pupils know and remember of the intended curriculum. This hinders some teachers from identifying misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge quickly enough. Leaders should continue to refine their approach to assessment in these subjects, to support teachers to identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge.

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 February 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	139467
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10268991
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	382
Appropriate authority	Board of directors
Chair of board of directors	Nick Johnson
Headteacher	Dominic Hemington
Website	www.fishermoreprimary.net
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There is provision for two-year-olds.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative providers for pupils.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The school's last section 48 inspection was carried out in June 2018.

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 that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and members of staff. She also met with representatives of the board of directors, including the chair and the CEO. She also met with the chair of governors. She held telephone conversations with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in mathematics, history and early reading. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and staff, spoke to some pupils about their

learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum and assessment in some other subjects.

- The inspector checked the procedures for safeguarding. She met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding.
- The inspector listened to pupils in key stages 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector observed behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime and spoke to pupils about their views of the school, behaviour and bullying.
- The inspector reviewed documentation, including minutes of the local governing body meetings, leaders' self-evaluation and school development plans.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text responses. She also spoke to parents before the start of the school day to gather their views.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Jenny Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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