

Inspection of Atherton St George's C of E Primary School

Derby Street, Atherton, Manchester M46 0HJ

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils said that they feel happy and safe in school. Leaders have designed an ambitious, exciting curriculum for pupils, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils respond well to leaders' high expectations for their achievement. Pupils work hard in their lessons and they are encouraged by staff to do their best. In line with one of the school's values, pupils strive to shine.

Pupils said that they always have someone to go to if they feel worried, sad or overwhelmed. They appreciate the support that they receive to look after their own mental health.

Leaders expect the best of pupils' behaviour. Pupils show respect and care for each other and for adults in school. When incidents of bullying occur, staff act quickly and appropriately to make it stop. The atmosphere in school is calm and welcoming.

Older pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibilities in school. For example, they are keen to act as 'knights' who carry out a wide range of roles. Pupils appreciate the experiences that staff provide through the 'top-ten passport', such as residential trips and visits to the theatre.

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

For the most part, leaders have designed a well-ordered curriculum for pupils, including children in the early years. This helps pupils to build successfully on what they know already. The curriculum ensures that learning flows seamlessly from when children join the school in the provision for two-year-olds or the Nursery and Reception classes through to Year 6.

Leaders have ensured that staff are suitably trained and supported to deliver the curriculums well. In the main, teachers use assessment strategies appropriately within lessons to check on pupils' learning and identify misconceptions. Nevertheless, in a small number of subjects, leaders are not as clear about what content they want pupils to learn. Where this is the case, pupils find it difficult to remember their earlier learning. This prevents some pupils from making connections between what they have learned and new subject content.

Leaders have appropriate systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with SEND in a timely manner. Pupils with SEND are supported well by staff to access the same curriculum as their classmates.

Leaders have made sure that staff are equipped well to deliver the phonics programme. This ensures that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of early reading across the school. Staff ensure that pupils practise reading by choosing

books for them that are matched closely to the sounds that they have learned. As a result, pupils' confidence in their own reading ability improves over time.

Pupils who struggle with reading typically receive appropriate support from well-trained staff. However, on occasion, some staff do not identify pupils who are not keeping up with the phonics programme. This prevents some pupils from receiving the support that they need to catch up in a timely manner.

Leaders have prioritised a love of reading throughout the school. For example, pupils benefit from reading a wide range of texts together in class. Pupils are keen to talk about literary characters that they come across in these texts.

Children in the early years are independent, enthusiastic learners who are keen to solve problems. Pupils behave very well in school and they show high levels of respect for adults and for each other. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally very positive. There is very little low-level disruption in lessons. Leaders have placed a strong focus on promoting strong attendance and punctuality. Pupils attend school regularly.

Leaders have made pupils' personal development an absolute priority. Pupils benefit from a wide-ranging programme of activities that help them to learn important information. For example, they learn about the characteristics of healthy relationships and the importance of looking after their physical health.

Pupils have a clear understanding of fundamental British values and the differences that exist between people. They know that discrimination of any kind is not acceptable. Pupils have a strong understanding of the school's values. They appreciate how these contribute to their respectful behaviour around school.

Governors and trustees are supportive of leaders. They know the school well and they work together to offer an appropriate level of challenge.

Parents and carers are supportive of leaders' efforts to develop strong relationships with the whole community. Leaders are mindful of staff's well-being and they have taken appropriate steps to reduce the workload of staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding. There is a culture of vigilance and leaders keep meticulous safeguarding records.

Leaders have forged strong, productive working relationships with parents and outside agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive appropriate help.

Leaders have designed the curriculum to offer many opportunities to teach pupils how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- From time to time, some staff do not identify those few pupils who are not keeping up with the phonics programme. This prevents these pupils from receiving timely support to help them catch up. Leaders should ensure that staff are skilled in identifying and supporting those pupils who are struggling to keep up with the early reading curriculum.
- In a few subjects, leaders have not identified the content that they want pupils to learn. This hinders some teachers in designing learning that helps pupils to embed what they have been taught previously. Leaders should ensure that they finalise their curriculum thinking in these few subjects so that teachers are clear about the knowledge that pupils should gain.

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	144371
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10255976
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	374
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrea Atherton
Headteacher	Lisa Boardman
Website	www.saintgeorges.wigan.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- Leaders do make use of alternative providers for any pupils.
- This school is part of The Wings' CE trust.
- The school belongs to the Diocese of Manchester. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place June 2019.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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.
- During this inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher and a wide range of other staff.

- The inspectors met with some members of the local governing body, representatives of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils about their work and their wider school life.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents relating to safeguarding. They examined leaders' approach to safer recruitment. The inspectors also spoke to staff about their safeguarding knowledge and checked how well they understood their safeguarding responsibilities.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during playtimes and while in lessons.
- The inspectors spoke with parents to gather their views about the school. They considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives into early reading, mathematics, history, design and technology, and physical education. They spoke with the staff who lead these subjects, visited lessons and spoke with teachers. They also spoke with pupils about their learning and viewed examples of their work.
- The inspectors observed children in the Nursery and Reception classes and listened to pupils in key stage 1 read to a trusted adult.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Liz Davidson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gaynor Rennie	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Berry	Ofsted Inspector

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