

Inspection of a good school: St Matthew's Church of England Primary School

Chadderton Hall Road, Chadderton, Oldham, Lancashire OL9 0BN

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 October 2023

Outcome

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to belong to this welcoming school community. They enjoy coming to school. They celebrate each other's differences and learn the importance of treating everyone equally. This helps them to make friends easily and behave kindly towards each other, demonstrating the 'St Matthew's CARES' values.

Pupils know that the school wants the best for them. They strive to meet their teachers' high expectations by behaving well and working hard in lessons. They encourage one another with their learning. This helps everyone to be successful, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to engage with their community and the wider world. For example, pupils raise money for charities, participate in church services together and share their interests and experiences with pupils at a school in Tanzania. Older pupils are encouraged to be leaders and to support others through their actions. Those who are prefects and well-being champions value their responsibilities. They enjoy being role models for their peers.

Parents and carers are exceptionally happy with the school. They value the care and support that their children receive. Pupils feel safe at school. They know that staff will take their worries seriously.

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

Governors, leaders and staff are united in their ambition for pupils to benefit from a high-quality education. They are determined that all pupils, including those with SEND, should learn a broad and rich body of knowledge.

The curriculum reflects these high ambitions. In the majority of subjects, the most important knowledge for pupils to learn is arranged in a logical order from Reception Year to Year 6. This helps pupils to build new learning securely on what they already know. By the end of key stage 2, pupils typically achieve highly in national tests.

In the main, teachers deliver the curriculum well. They explain new concepts clearly and ensure that pupils revisit previous learning often. This helps most pupils to remember what they have been taught. However, some teachers are less adept at selecting activities to deliver this knowledge. As a result, some pupils occasionally do not remember all that they should. In a small number of subjects, the school is just beginning to develop strategies to check what pupils have learned. At times, the knowledge that teachers check is not what is intended in the curriculum. This makes it harder for them to know whether pupils are remembering the most important learning over time.

Reading has a central place in the curriculum. The school has successfully introduced a new phonics programme. Staff are well trained to deliver this programme effectively. In Reception Year and key stage 1, the books that pupils read are closely matched to the sounds that they have learned. This helps pupils to read accurately and with growing fluency. Skilled support from staff ensures that pupils who find reading difficult, including older pupils in key stage 2, catch up with their peers. The school ensures that parents know how to continue this support at home, for instance by suggesting books that they can read together with their children.

The school has thorough systems in place to identify any additional needs that pupils may have. This includes thoughtful communication with parents. Staff make use of the detailed information that they are given about pupils with SEND. This ensures that these pupils receive the help that they need in order to learn well. As a result, most pupils with SEND succeed alongside their classmates. A small number of pupils who need more specialist help benefit from expert, individual support, including from external agencies. Their curriculum is successfully meeting their individual needs.

As soon as they join the Reception class, children form strong relationships with staff. These continue throughout the school. Pupils are eager to learn in lessons. They follow routines with enthusiasm because they know what is expected of them. This leads to a calm and mutually respectful atmosphere in which learning is hardly ever disrupted.

The school has carefully considered how to prepare pupils for life in modern society. There is a well-designed programme to support pupils' personal development. They readily remember their learning about different faiths, cultures and types of families. This helps them to respect each other's differences.

Governors and leaders have a detailed and accurate view of the school's strengths and priorities. They work closely with staff to ensure that the school continues to improve. Staff feel listened to and well supported. They said that leaders carefully consider their workload and well-being before making decisions that will affect them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects other than reading and mathematics, assessment strategies do not give staff an accurate understanding of how well pupils are learning the curriculum. This means that gaps can open in some pupils' knowledge without teachers being aware. The school should ensure that assessment strategies are well matched to the knowledge in the curriculum, so that teachers can accurately identify any missed or forgotten learning and help pupils to secure that knowledge in their long-term memory.
- In some subjects, teachers do not consistently choose the most appropriate activities to deliver the knowledge that pupils need to learn. This hinders some pupils' learning in these areas of the curriculum. The school should ensure that teachers receive appropriate guidance and support to deliver subject curriculums consistently well.

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 October 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	105709
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10294229
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	399
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Pamela Lord
Headteacher	Simon Buxton-Moore
Website	www.stmatthewschadderton.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Manchester. Its most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character was in July 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place by July 2026.
- A small number of pupils at this school with SEND have significantly more profound and complex needs than those typically found in a mainstream school.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector completed deep dives in early reading, science and history. He met with subject leaders, visited some lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils. The inspector also listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in several other subjects.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation. He spoke to the headteacher and senior leaders throughout the inspection. He also met with the SEND coordinator.
- The inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also met with a representative of the local authority and spoke to a diocesan representative by telephone.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff.

Inspection team

Ben Hill, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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