

Inspection of Great Harwood St John's Church of England Primary School

St John's Street, Great Harwood, Blackburn, Lancashire BB6 7ES

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years, enjoy coming to Great Harwood St John's Primary School. They said that they are happy in school and that they feel safe. Parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive about the experiences that their children gain at Great Harwood St John's. The school has worked successfully to form strong relationships with pupils and their families. Pupils said that staff care for them very well.

Pupils behave well during lessons. They know that staff have high expectations of their behaviour and they enjoy the variety of rewards that they can gain for positive conduct. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils trust staff to help with any worries or concerns that they may have.

The school is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils rise to the high expectations that the school sets for their achievement and they typically learn well across the curriculum. Children in the early years make an exceptional start to their education.

Pupils experience additional visits that help to bring their learning to life. For instance, they spoke with enthusiasm about what they saw in London. They also said that a recent trip to a museum had helped them to solidify what they know about the Egyptians.

Pupils appreciate the range of extra-curricular clubs that they can attend. These range from choir practice, dancing and performing arts to tag rugby and cross-country club. The school supports all pupils to be able to participate fully in these activities.

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

In the early years, the school has designed an ambitious and carefully ordered curriculum that is delivered expertly by highly skilled and knowledgeable staff. Right from the start, experienced staff place a sharp focus on developing children's vocabulary and communication skills. Children are excited by the thoughtful and interesting activities that staff design for them. This supports children well to acquire the knowledge that they need for subsequent learning. Children are very well prepared for the demands of Year 1.

The school ensures that reading is a priority. Younger children begin learning phonics as soon as they join the school in the Reception Year. Staff use high-quality texts to engage pupils. For example, in the Reception Year, children use the characters from their stories to develop their storytelling skills. Staff encourage older pupils to read widely. Pupils enjoy listening to the range of texts selected by their teachers.

Staff deliver the phonics programme consistently well. The school ensures that pupils read books that are well matched to the sounds that they know. When pupils struggle with reading, skilled staff support them to keep up with their peers. By the end of Year 2, pupils read with fluency and confidence.

Pupils benefit from highly respectful relationships with staff. Staff take the time to help pupils to understand their feelings. The school has introduced strategies to ensure that pupils can work through their worries. Pupils are conscientious. They work hard and want to do their best. In the early years, staff support children well to understand and follow routines. This helps children to learn to cooperate with each other and to take turns.

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum which meets pupils' interests and aspirations. The school has designed learning so that pupils can build logically on what they already know. However, in a small number of subjects, the school is still finalising the knowledge that pupils should learn and when this content should be delivered.

In the main, staff deliver the curriculum confidently. They explain new concepts clearly to pupils. In lessons, staff check that pupils have understood these concepts before they introduce new learning. Staff use assessment strategies well to check that pupils have acquired the knowledge that they need. Staff provide appropriate support to pupils who occasionally develop misconceptions.

Pupils with SEND successfully learn the same curriculum as their classmates. The school has suitable systems in place to identify pupils' additional needs. Expert staff are well equipped to provide appropriate support so that these pupils can learn well.

Pupils were clear about the importance of treating everyone fairly. They spoke with a well-developed understanding about the different types of discrimination. Pupils were adamant that any form of prejudice is not tolerated in their school.

Pupils were confident about the steps that they could take to keep themselves safe online and how to live a healthy lifestyle. They take on responsibilities with pride, for example when they become elected as school councillors or when acting as prefects.

The school has developed a myriad of ways to engage with and support families as well as pupils. For example, staff prioritise the well-being of pupils and their families so that parents have greater capacity to support children with their learning.

Governors are informed well about the quality of education for pupils. They check that staff are supported well to carry out their roles effectively. Staff are proud to work at this school. They feel highly valued by leaders. Staff said that the strong relationships help to support their well-being. For example, the school factors staff's workload into the decisions that it makes about the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the school is still in the process of finalising the knowledge that pupils should learn and how this content should be delivered and assessed. This means that, in these subjects, teachers are not as confident to design activities that support pupils to build their knowledge securely over time. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, teachers are clear about what pupils should learn and the order in which this content should be delivered.

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	119421
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10226307
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	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Julie Molineux
Headteacher	Tracey Parker
Website	www.greatharwoodstjohnscofeprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	14 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new deputy headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Blackburn. The last section 48 inspection took place in November 2018. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place before the end of 2025.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff.
- Inspectors met with some governors, met a representative of the local authority and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed pupils read to a trusted adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during playtimes and while in lessons.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors met with parents to gather their views and opinions about the school.

Inspection team

Sarah Barraclough, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sharon Cliff

Ofsted Inspector

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