

Inspection of St Barnabas C of E Primary Academy

Parkhouse Street, Openshaw, Manchester M11 2JX

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 June 2024

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	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Emily Kirk. This school is part of Vantage CE Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jill Messham (CEO), and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Phillip Mason.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to attend this caring school. Those who move from other schools during the school year receive a warm welcome and settle quickly into the friendly atmosphere. Right from the start of the Nursery Year through to Year 6, children enjoy excellent relationships with adults and with their peers.

The school has raised its expectations of pupils' achievement. It has also made positive and swift changes to the curriculum to enable pupils to gain a deep body of knowledge across different subjects. Pupils have responded well to the higher demands. They demonstrate a strong understanding of the knowledge that they have gained over time.

Children in the early years, and pupils across the rest of the school, are enthusiastic learners. They are supported to behave well. Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors and to one another.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences that enhance the curriculum, such as building and programming their own robots to develop their computing skills. They also have access to a range of clubs that cater for their interests, such as yoga or rock climbing.

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

In 2023, the school's published data for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 was significantly below that of other schools nationally. This was due to considerable turbulence in staffing in recent years.

The trust has taken effective action to stabilise staffing arrangements, especially in the leadership team. This has enabled the school to provide curriculum leaders with careful support and suitable training to ensure that they are well equipped to lead their areas of responsibility, including in the early years. The school has made swift improvements to the curriculum to ensure that staff have a shared understanding of how pupils should build their knowledge in each subject. As a result, pupils currently at the school are achieving well against the curriculum goals.

There is a sharp focus on defining the key knowledge that the school wants pupils to learn in each subject. In the early years, staff receive the guidance that they need to know what children should learn in each area of learning. This is enabling staff, right from the start of children's education journey to design lesson activities that build pupils' knowledge over time. Staff assess pupils' knowledge carefully to help identify where further work is needed to secure pupils' previous learning. However, the changes in a small number of subjects have only recently taken place, which means that, although improving, there continue to be small gaps in pupils' recall of key knowledge.

The school has provided staff with comprehensive training to ensure that the phonics curriculum is delivered consistently well. Learning in the Nursery Class is carefully structured to build children's understanding in readiness for developing their phonics knowledge in the Reception Year. In key stage 1, pupils read books that are well matched to their knowledge. This helps them to develop their reading fluency and comprehension skills.

For some pupils, there is extra support that helps them to keep up with the phonics programme. Even so, the strategies to support some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to overcome their difficulties in learning to read are not effective enough. Consequently, these pupils do not read as confidently and as fluently as they should. Otherwise, the school's approach to identifying the needs of pupils with SEND has improved. This is enabling staff to assist these pupils to access the curriculum in other subjects and to achieve well.

The school has put stringent arrangements in place for the management of attendance. This means that it is well aware of the different reasons why some pupils do not attend school regularly. This is leading to marked improvements in reducing the absence levels for some pupils who, in the past, missed large periods of time away from school.

From the start of the Nursery Year through to Year 6, staff have a consistent approach to supporting pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in lessons and at breaktimes. When misbehaviour does occur, staff deal with this swiftly so that there is no disruption to learning.

Pupils benefit from a well-thought-out set of opportunities that enhance their personal development. Pupils are respectful of others' opinions and beliefs. They have a strong awareness of how different faiths have common features and also how they differ. Pupils have a strong sense of what it means to be equal. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of fundamental British values, such as when voting for school councillors as part of their work on democracy.

The school promotes pupils' social and emotional development well. This includes in the early years and in Year 1. Here, the provision to develop pupils' speech and language enables them to express their wishes and preferences and to fully participate alongside their peers. This enables children to talk confidently to visitors about their work.

The local advisory board question the school in detail about its provision. This ensures that the trustees have a clear understanding of the school's effectiveness. There are clear arrangements in place to quality assure the work of the school, which has enabled trust leaders to play a key role in bringing about the positive change.

Staff feel well supported in their roles. They appreciate the steps taken by the school to help them with their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In key stage 1, a small number of pupils with SEND do not receive effective enough support to develop their reading knowledge. This means that they do not read with fluency or confidence. The school should ensure that the support that these pupils receive enables them to gain the phonics knowledge that they need to read accurately.
- Some pupils have gaps in their learning due to weaknesses in the previous curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not know some of the essential knowledge that some pupils need for their future learning. The school should ensure that staff identify and address the gaps in pupils' knowledge so that they have the knowledge that they need to absorb new knowledge.

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 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	137866
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10337692
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip Mason
CEO of trust	Jill Messham
Principal	Emily Kirk
Website	www.stbarnabas.manchester.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 June 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been a number of changes to the teaching staff since the last inspection, including in the leadership team.
- The school is part of Vantage CE Academies Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- St Barnabas is a Church of England school. The school's most recent section 48 inspection of a school with a religious character took place in November 2022. The next section 48 inspection is due in 2027.

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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in other subjects, looked at a sample of work in these subjects and spoke with pupils about their work.
- Inspectors heard pupils read individually and as part of classroom activities.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey as well as Ofsted's inspection survey for staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at breaktimes and around the school. They looked at records for behaviour and bullying and spoke with pupils and staff.
- Inspectors discussed the provision in place for pupils' personal development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Gower-Jones

Ofsted Inspector

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