

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

Tyrer Avenue, Worsley Mesnes, Tyler Avenue, Wigan, Lancashire WN3 5XE

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 September 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils are well cared for and safe. All pupils have a 'go-to person' who they know will help and support them with any worries that they have. Pupils trust the school staff. They know that issues, including bullying, are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Staff want the best for all pupils. Leaders' expectations of pupils' conduct and work are high. Pupils rise to these high expectations. They behave well. At social times, the school is calm and orderly. Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous.

Pupils achieve well. Their learning in all subjects builds from year to year. They become fluent readers who are well prepared for their next steps.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities and opportunities beyond the classroom. Sport, provided in partnership with a local rugby club, is particularly strong and popular. Staff take pupils on visits that help to bring their learning to life. Pupils take on leadership responsibilities within school with pride.

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

The school's curriculum has been carefully organised by leaders. In all subjects, pupils' learning builds in carefully ordered steps, starting from the early years. Staff are clear about the key knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember. For example, in mathematics, teachers focus on developing pupils' knowledge of number and understanding of mathematical concepts. In most subjects, teachers make regular checks on pupils' learning to see if they remember what they have been taught.

Leaders have strengthened the curriculum in subjects beyond English and mathematics. They have organised the curriculum to ensure that pupils' subject-specific knowledge grows as they move through the school. Pupils are learning well. However, in a few subjects, teachers do not check how well pupils have learned important knowledge. This

means that teachers do not identify where pupils need to repeat and strengthen their learning. Consequently, in these subjects, pupils do not remember some key content as well as they should.

Staff work closely with parents and carers to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders ensure that these pupils study the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers and teaching assistants adapt their teaching and provide extra support for pupils when needed. They do this skilfully and pupils progress well through the curriculum as a result.

Reading is one of leaders' top priorities. Many younger pupils' reading development was set back by the COVID-19 pandemic. Several still cannot read as well as they should. Leaders have put in place an effective phonics curriculum. Staff have the right levels of expertise. Daily phonics lessons, from the start of the Reception Year, are delivered well by staff. The books that pupils read match their ability. Staff encourage pupils in all years to read for pleasure. In the Nursery class and in the provision for two-year-olds, staff share story books and rhymes with children each day. Most pupils develop as confident and fluent readers. The steps that leaders have taken are helping those pupils behind in their reading to catch up with their peers.

In class, pupils work hard and are keen to do well. They listen respectfully to their teachers and to each other. Pupils follow teachers' instructions. This begins in the early years, where children settle quickly into classroom routines. Pupils' calm behaviour means that everyone can concentrate on their learning without interruption.

Leaders place great emphasis on pupils' wider development. The personal, social and health education curriculum is comprehensive and closely matched to the needs of pupils. For example, staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe when not in school. There is a strong emphasis on supporting pupils with their mental and physical health and well-being.

Pupils learn about concepts that are important for life in modern Britain. For example, in history, the key concepts of democracy and the rule of law are revisited repeatedly in different topics.

The governing body provides strong support and challenge to leaders. The trustees provide high-quality support for governors, leaders and staff.

The school's staff form a united and committed team. They appreciate the work that leaders do to ensure that their workload is manageable. Staff said that they are proud to work at the school. Morale is excellent.

Most parents value the school. A small number expressed reservations when they completed Ofsted Parent View. Inspection evidence did not support their concerns.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of care and keeping pupils safe. Leaders have trained staff thoroughly. Staff know that keeping pupils safe is their top priority. They pass on to leaders any concerns that they have. Leaders deal with these concerns appropriately. Leaders have established strong relationships with outside agencies. They make every effort to get pupils and their families the support that they need. Staff are tenacious in challenging agencies when they feel that pupils are not getting the right help.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They find out about dangers they may face in the community, such as drugs and alcohol.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, teachers do not check that pupils remember key knowledge as well as they should. This means that teachers do not identify if pupils are secure in their learning before moving on to new learning. Leaders should ensure that the teachers in these subjects encourage pupils to remember key knowledge more effectively.

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 predecessor school, St James' CofE Primary School, to be good in February 2011.

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	145107
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10241416
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	244
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Stuart Harrison
Headteacher	Guy Lovgreen
Website	www.saintjames.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy school in April 2018. At this time, it joined the Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust. When the predecessor school, St James' CofE Primary School, was last inspected it was judged good.
- The headteacher took up his post in September 2021.
- There have been several changes to the membership of the governing body this year, including its chair.
- The school is a Church of England primary school, within the Liverpool diocese. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2016.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children within its Nursery class.
- Leaders do not currently make use of alternative provision.

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 their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher and other school leaders. He held discussions with four governors, one of whom is also a director of the trust. He met with the chief executive officer and education director of the trust. He spoke over the telephone with the deputy director of education for the diocese.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, he discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also discussed the curriculum in other subjects with leaders. He considered the school's work to support pupils with SEND.
- Safeguarding was considered by meeting with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, and the school's learning mentor. The inspector scrutinised policies and records relating to child protection and examined the safeguarding checks made on staff before they join the school.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- The inspector spoke with several members of staff, including those who have recently joined the teaching profession. He considered the responses from staff to Ofsted's online inspection questionnaire.
- The inspector spoke informally with pupils at breaktime and lunchtime. He observed the school at these times. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the start of the day and considered the responses, including written responses, to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Alun Williams, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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