

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St James' Church of England Primary School, Clitheroe

Greenacre Street, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 1ED

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 March 2025

Outcome

St James' Church of England Primary School, Clitheroe has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and nurtured at this school. They feel safe and are well cared for by staff, who will help them if they have any worries.

The school has high expectations for the achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Right from the start of the early years, children and pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are immersed in an environment that is rich in number and vocabulary. Children in the Reception Year benefit from the engaging curriculum, which ensures that they develop a solid foundation in reading and mathematics. This prepares them well for Year 1. Pupils across the school achieve well.

Pupils' behaviour is very positive. In lessons, and during lunchtimes and breaktimes, pupils move around the school calmly and sensibly. They respond to the kind direction of staff, who are quick to praise pupils' positive conduct.

The school prepares pupils well for life beyond school and for the next steps in their education. They do this by providing opportunities for leadership, for example, by being a member of the active school council. Older pupils act as 'buddies' and playleaders for younger pupils.

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

Since the last inspection, leadership of the school has changed. Governors have ensured that the school continues to have an effective leadership structure and staff team in place. The school works closely with the local authority on its continued journey to

maintain and improve standards. School leaders are considerate of staff's workload and well-being in decisions they make. As a result, staff feel valued.

The school has developed a well-designed and ambitious curriculum that helps pupils to build their knowledge and skills from Reception Year to Year 6. The school identifies the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn with clarity. This helps teachers to know what to focus on in their teaching. Typically, staff design activities that enable pupils to learn the curriculum well. However, on occasion, staff do not match learning activities sufficiently well to the knowledge that pupils should learn. This means that, at times, some pupils do not learn key curriculum content as well as they could.

Reading is at the heart of the school and its curriculum. Pupils read carefully chosen texts that inspire a love of reading and reflect the diversity of modern Britain, as well as providing helpful links to subjects, such as history and geography. Pupils enjoy reading, and they read for pleasure at school and at home. Staff deliver the phonics programme effectively. They emphasise the importance of using the correct pronunciation as pupils learn new sounds. When the school identifies gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge, these pupils are given the support they need to catch up quickly. As a result, most pupils learn to read with fluency and confidence.

The school's approach to teaching pupils to write is not equally successful. Children in the Reception Year and pupils in key stage 1 are shown how to form letters and how to practise their writing. However, at times, staff do not spot errors in pupils' writing sufficiently well. As a result, some pupils do not develop the fluency that they need to become proficient writers. This hinders their learning across the curriculum.

The school identifies and supports the needs of pupils with SEND effectively. Teachers adapt learning well, including providing suitable extra resources to meet pupils' individual needs. The school works closely with parents and carers to help these pupils to achieve as well as they can. The school ensures that every pupil has the provision that they need to access the full curriculum. This tailored support enables pupils with SEND to participate in all areas of school life.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards their education. This begins in the early years, where children learn to listen well and to work cooperatively and with increasing concentration.

The school ensures that its approaches to supporting pupils' behaviour are clear. Pupils learn that understanding their emotions helps them to recognise and manage their own behaviour. The school has equally high expectations of pupils' attendance. It works with families to remove barriers to good attendance. As a result, the attendance of most pupils is high.

The school provides well for pupils' personal development. Pupils learn to be respectful and do not tolerate discrimination. They learn how to stay safe, including when online, and how to live healthily by eating the right foods and exercising frequently. Pupils access

many sporting opportunities, clubs and trips, including residential experiences where they learn to work as part of a team. All pupils learn to play a musical instrument.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not fully develop the appropriate foundations that they need for their written communication. As a result, pupils' writing fluency is not as developed as it could be as they move through the curriculum. The school should ensure that there is an increased emphasis on teaching pupils writing skills and knowledge so that they are well prepared to tackle the requirements of each stage of their education.
- On occasion, teachers do not match learning activities sufficiently well to the knowledge that is set out in the curriculum. This means that, at times, some pupils do not learn key curriculum content as well as they should. The school should ensure that teachers have the knowledge and skills that they need to design learning activities that help pupils to learn the curriculum in sufficient depth.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in December 2019.

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	119419
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10377972
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	277
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Clayton
Headteacher	Jonathan Leeming
Website	www.stjames-clitheroe.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England voluntary-aided school. The most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in March 2024. The next section 48 inspection will take place in the 2029 academic year.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club on the school premises.
- The school currently makes use of one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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.

- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. She also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- 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 met with the special educational needs coordinator and scrutinised provision for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

Cleo Cunningham, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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