

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

Church Street, Blackpool, Lancashire FY1 3NX

Inspection dates:

11–12 March 2020

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Blackpool St John's is a warm and welcoming school. The pupils who spoke with me said that they are happy and love school. They attend regularly. They said that they feel safe and can talk to staff if they have a worry. Pupils told me that staff look after them properly. Staff teach pupils how to stay safe online and when outdoors.

Pupils achieve well because leaders and staff have high expectations. Pupils said that other pupils behave sensibly. On the rare occasions when pupils' behaviour is not good or when bullying occurs, staff resolve issues quickly. Older pupils enjoy being rewarded by staff for their sensible behaviour, for instance with house points. Pupils appreciate their many opportunities, in roles such as prefects and school councillors, to help the work of the school. They represent themselves and their school with pride.

Pupils take part in many enrichment activities. For example, pupils in Year 4 visit the Roman settlement in Ribchester as part of their history work. Pupils in Year 6 develop their teamwork and physical skills by taking part in an adventure residential. Pupils take part in a wide range of out-of-school activities, including football, dance and guitar.

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

The headteacher, supported by a new leadership team and capable governing body, leads Blackpool St John's very effectively. Leaders know the pupils well. Leaders have an accurate view of what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve further. Leaders' plans for improvement are clear and precise.

Leaders and staff have designed a broad and balanced curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. They have organised subjects so that learning builds on what pupils already know. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. For instance, pupils' attainment in reading,

writing and mathematics in Year 6 is consistently above the national averages. This means that they are well prepared for continuing their education at secondary school.

Leaders and staff develop pupils' reading successfully. Children make a strong start to their reading in early years. This continues into Year 1. Pupils have access to a wide range of high-quality fiction and non-fiction books throughout the school. They enjoy reading and read regularly. The delivery of the phonics curriculum has improved over time, partly because all staff have received carefully planned training. Staff are knowledgeable and skilled in teaching phonics. They give effective support to pupils who fall behind to help them to catch up. Staff match reading books well to the letter sounds that pupils are learning. Teachers make skilled use of group reading activities to improve pupils' understanding of what they read. Teachers select books carefully to link with topics that pupils study. For example, pupils in Year 6 are reading the book 'Holes' by Louis Sachar, which is linked to their geography topic about North America.

In many subjects, leaders and staff carefully consider the content of the curriculum. In mathematics, teachers plan pupils' learning in a logical order. This helps to ensure that pupils know and remember essential mathematical knowledge. In geography, pupils in Year 4 told me how their learning about plastic pollution builds on their previous studies of trade links in the Amazon and about the world's oceans. In science, staff teach the curriculum successfully and pupils achieve well. The strengths in these subjects are not replicated in all areas of the school's curriculum. Some subjects are not as well developed. Leaders should continue to embed recent changes to the curriculum to enable pupils to achieve as well as they should.

Leaders and staff focus clearly on developing pupils' personal development, including their well-being and resilience. Pupils understand democracy. They learn about other faiths, such as Islam and Judaism. This helps to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. They learn how to become good citizens. They are proud of their efforts to support others, for example their charity work for Children in Need and Sports Relief. Pupils enjoy their regular assemblies about different faiths and beliefs, including those with the parish vicar. Pupils' good behaviour means that teachers can properly focus on teaching the curriculum.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum increasingly meets the needs of children in the early years. For example, staff place an important focus on helping children to listen, communicate and read. Although in 2019 the proportion of children who were ready for their learning in Year 1 was better than in previous years, more work remains to be done to improve the curriculum. The early years is a vibrant, safe and well-organised place to learn.

Support for pupils with SEND is led well. Staff have effective procedures to identify those pupils who need extra help with their learning. Leaders carefully track the impact that this support has on the achievement of individual pupils. Those pupils with emotional needs are supported expertly by staff, which is having a positive impact on pupils' ability to learn and flourish at school.

All staff enjoy working at Blackpool St. John's. They value the help and guidance that the headteacher and governors give them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make certain that all staff receive regular training and know what to do if they have any concerns about the well-being of a pupil. Staff, including the family engagement worker and learning mentor, know families well. They work with parents and carers to meet the needs of pupils. Leaders keep detailed records about safeguarding. Leaders and staff work closely with several agencies to ensure that pupils receive appropriate help and support. Leaders and staff teach pupils how to act safely, when travelling near roads, when visiting the beach or if they meet strangers online or in person.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not plan and teach all subjects to the same high standard as some others. This means that in some of their work, pupils do not learn as well as they should. Leaders need to make sure that the curriculum is organised and taught consistently well in all subjects and classes. By doing this, teachers will help pupils to achieve highly across the whole curriculum.
- Not all children achieve well in the early years. Some children are not fully ready for their learning in Year 1. Leaders should continue with the recent changes that they have made to the curriculum and teaching in the early years. This will ensure that all children achieve strongly across the areas of learning.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 4–5 July 2012.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	119595
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	10111020
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	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Blackburn
Headteacher	Nadine Galloway
Website	http://www.stjohnsblackpool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 December 2015, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The new headteacher has been in post since December 2018. Prior to this, she was the deputy headteacher at the school.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection of religious education was in February 2017.

Information about this inspection

- I met with several school leaders, including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the early years leader and the leaders for SEND.
- I met with five governors, including the vice-chair of the governing body.
- I took account of the 22 responses from staff to Ofsted's questionnaire. There were too few responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to evaluate.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. This work included meeting with subject leaders, evaluation of leaders' curriculum planning, visits to some lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work, listening to pupils read and discussions with teachers, teaching assistants and pupils.

- I looked at safeguarding procedures and checked records of safeguarding and pupils' behaviour. I reviewed pupils' attendance and records of teachers' recent training. I spoke with staff and pupils to check their understanding of safeguarding procedures.
- I looked at the quality of leaders' improvement planning and several of the school's policies.
- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. I also spoke with pupils about school life and their views on personal development and behaviour.

Inspection team

Gary Bevin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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