

Inspection of St John's Church of England Primary School

James Street, Failsworth, Manchester M35 9PY

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of this school, which is at the heart of the local community. They are happy to come to school because they make lots of friends and their teachers are kind. They said that they feel safe because leaders and staff listen to them if they have a problem. They understand the importance of treating everyone with respect, regardless of their differences. Bullying is rare. Should it happen, leaders resolve it quickly.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well. They are polite to adults and to each other. In lessons, they are keen to learn. They settle down to tasks quickly. At lunchtime, they socialise well with each other as they eat together on 'family' tables.

Staff are determined that all pupils will succeed, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils try hard to live up to these high expectations. They enjoy their lessons and achieve well.

Pupils enjoy the enrichment opportunities available to them. They said that they like the daily assemblies in both the junior and infant sections of the school. The celebration assemblies every Friday are a highlight of each week.

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

Recently, with the support of the trust, leaders have made some significant improvements to the curriculum. Pupils, including those with SEND, follow an ambitious curriculum that provides strong foundations in reading and mathematics. It enables pupils to study a broad range of subjects.

Leaders have a secure understanding of what children in early years need to know, so that they are prepared for the key stage 1 curriculum. However, in early years, there is some variation in the way in which staff teach some of the themes. As a result, children are not as well prepared for some aspects of learning in key stage 1 as they could be.

Leaders have designed most subject curriculums well, so that pupils build logically on what they have learned before. Teachers teach these curriculums well. However, in a small number of subjects, leaders and teachers are not clear enough about the knowledge that they want pupils to acquire. Therefore, in these subjects, pupils do not learn some of the building blocks that are essential for their future learning.

Children in Nursery and Reception Years and key stage 1 benefit from well-thought-through approaches to developing their fluency in reading, writing and understanding of numbers. Recently, with the support of the trust, leaders have made significant changes to the early reading curriculum. All staff have received training in the new, clearly structured phonics programme. This has helped them to teach their pupils essential phonic knowledge effectively. These changes mean that

pupils, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, are becoming more confident and fluent readers. Teachers identify at an early stage any pupils who are in danger of falling behind. Staff provide effective additional support for these pupils.

Leaders recognise the importance of reading for all pupils. They have thought carefully about which high-quality books they should read as they move through the school. Pupils in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 read frequently in school, and their teachers encourage them to read a wide range of books at home.

Teachers know their pupils well. They use a wide range of teaching strategies to capture their interest. Pupils respond enthusiastically to these strategies. Teachers are conscientious in checking at the end of a lesson that pupils have understood what they have taught them.

Leaders accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND. They provide staff with the information that they require to enable them to help these pupils. Staff know all pupils with SEND well and use appropriate strategies to help them to succeed.

Across the school, pupils behave well. They rarely disrupt lessons. Usually, they listen carefully and follow the instructions of their teachers. Staff support effectively those pupils who find it more difficult to concentrate on learning.

Pupils learn to be responsible citizens. The well-designed personal development programme helps them to respect differences, challenge stereotypes and know the difference between right and wrong.

Trustees are well informed about the school. They have developed quickly a realistic understanding of the strengths of the school and how it can be improved further. They take their responsibilities seriously and hold leaders to account through regular meetings with leaders.

Parents and carers speak highly of the school and the hard work of the staff. Teachers, including those at the early stage of their careers, value the support and development opportunities they receive from the trust. Staff appreciate that school leaders are mindful of their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff undertake regular training, so that they remain alert to the signs that might indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff follow clear procedures to report any concerns. Leaders follow these up promptly. The safeguarding team works well with outside agencies to obtain support for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe when online and in the community. They learn about healthy relationships and healthy lifestyles.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders and teachers are not clear enough about the curriculum content that pupils should learn. This means that sometimes, pupils are not prepared for the next steps in their learning. Leaders should develop further their curriculum thinking in these subjects. They should ensure that teachers are clear about the sequence of learning that pupils need to learn and remember across the full range of the curriculum.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, there is variation in the implementation of some of the seven main areas of learning. This means that there is some inconsistency in the curriculum opportunities for children. Leaders should ensure that there is consistency in the implementation of the curriculum across the Nursery and Reception classes, so that all children are ready for all aspects of their learning at key stage 1.

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 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	146670
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10267784
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	278
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Bond
Headteacher	Louise Bonter
Website	https://stjohns.oldham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Forward as One Church of England Multi Academy Trust. It joined this trust in September 2022 when the trust it had previously been a part of, Sola Fide Church of England Trust, closed.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and a range of teaching and support staff. The lead inspector spoke with two members of the board of trustees, including the chair of the trust.

- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust and spoke with a representative of the diocese and a representative of the local authority.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, art and geography. They met with subject leaders, visited some lessons, looked at pupils' work, and spoke with pupils and teachers. The lead inspector observed individual pupils reading to their teachers.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from Years 2 to 6. They also observed breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding procedures and the checks made on staff. They met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to the school development plan, self-evaluation documents, curriculum information and behaviour records.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- The lead inspector also considered the views of the parents who responded to Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments received via the free-text facility.

Inspection team

Timothy Gartside, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Schelene Ferris	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Metcalfe	Ofsted Inspector

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