

Inspection of a good school: Scarisbrick St Mark's Church of England Primary School

Southport Road, Scarisbrick, Ormskirk, Lancashire L40 9RE

Inspection date:

12 January 2023

Outcome

Scarisbrick St Mark's Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being part of the St Mark's family. They are happy and feel safe in school. Pupils get on well with their classmates and teachers. Pupils who join the school at different points during the year are helped to settle in and make friends quickly.

Leaders and staff are ambitious for the achievement of all pupils. Pupils, including children in the early years, work well in class and take pride in their work. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around school. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well during their time at St Mark's.

Pupils live up to leaders' high expectations for their behaviour. They are polite and respectful and offer visitors a warm welcome. Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and at playtimes. Pupils are confident that adults in school will listen to any worries they might have. On the extremely rare occasions that name-calling or bullying happens, staff deal with these situations quickly and effectively.

Pupils appreciate the wide selection of clubs that staff provide. Many pupils join in with sporting or musical activities. Members of the coding club enjoy taking part in international projects with other schools. Pupils also benefit from going on regular educational trips and residential visits.

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

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of phonics and reading. The phonics programme, although only in place for a relatively short time, is already well established. Teachers make sure that the youngest children in the early years start by developing their awareness of different sounds. Children in the Reception class, and pupils in key stage 1, learn phonics every day. They build their knowledge of letters and sounds in carefully ordered steps. They read confidently, using their phonic knowledge to help them with

tricky words. Older pupils continue to enjoy reading and can confidently talk about their favourite authors and types of books.

Leaders have developed a broad and engaging curriculum. The curriculum is developed well, identifying what pupils need to learn and the order in which they need to learn it. It is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. However, leaders are at quite an early stage of establishing how best to use assessments to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge so that these can be addressed. This includes checks on the high proportion of pupils who join the school part-way through their schooling, who often have different starting points and prior knowledge.

In lessons, teachers provide a range of well-chosen resources and activities to support pupils well with their learning. In the early years, children benefit from attractive and engaging indoor and outdoor learning areas. However, in the early years, there is more to do to ensure that the knowledge leaders want children to gain over time in different areas of learning is more clearly identified so that children gain the maximum benefit from their learning.

Leaders are quick to spot the additional needs of pupils with SEND, including in the early years. Staff provide effective support for these pupils in class. This helps pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils behave extremely well throughout the day. This makes a positive contribution to learning throughout the school. Lessons proceed with minimal disruption. In the early years, children concentrate on their learning and play well together.

Leaders take care to consider pupils' wider development. They ensure that pupils have opportunities to learn about the different cultures and beliefs to be found in modern British society. Pupils appreciate the importance of treating everyone with kindness and respect. Leaders ensure that pupils' physical and mental health are promoted well.

Governors are knowledgeable and enthusiastic advocates for the school. They know the school extremely well and are ambitious for its future. Leaders and governors think about the well-being of staff when they make decisions about the school. Staff are happy that their views are listened to and their workload considered.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture at the school. Staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training. They know how to spot signs that pupils may be at risk of harm and are quick to report any concerns that they have. Leaders act promptly if such concerns are reported. Record-keeping is thorough.

Staff make sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, such as when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, assessment strategies are not as effective as they could be. Teachers lack clarity about what pupils already know. This is particularly true when pupils are new to the school and their prior knowledge has been learned elsewhere. Leaders should ensure that assessment procedures more effectively identify pupils' prior knowledge so that teachers can build on what their pupils already know and can do.
- The knowledge that leaders would like children in early years to secure within the different areas of learning is sometimes not explicitly identified. Leaders should continue with their efforts to ensure that the early years curriculum builds sequentially in all areas. This will help to ensure that children are prepared consistently well for their future 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 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2013.

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	119410
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10256203
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gary Fairbrother
Headteacher	Marilyn Freeman
Website	www.st-marks.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Diocese of Liverpool. Its last section 48 inspection took place in March 2019.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school during the school year and in different year groups is much higher than in most schools nationally.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other leaders and staff.
- An inspector spoke to members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority and diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders,

visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at examples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors made checks on leaders' records for safeguarding and staff recruitment and spoke to staff about the procedures for safeguarding pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including a number of free-text comments. No responses to the online surveys for staff or pupils were received.

Inspection team

Neil Dixon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andy Hunt

Ofsted Inspector

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