

Inspection of a good school: Ellel St John the Evangelist Church of England Primary School

Chapel Street, Galgate, Lancaster, Lancashire LA2 0JS

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 October 2022

Outcome

Ellel St John the Evangelist Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love their school. They see it as a warm, friendly place where everyone is welcome, regardless of their differences. Younger and older pupils play happily alongside each other in their extensive outdoor area. Children in the early years have their own exciting garden to play in. Pupils especially like looking after the school's chickens. Members of the eco-school council care for these pets very conscientiously.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. Pupils try to live up to these high expectations by working hard and listening carefully. This helps pupils to achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). If ever pupils do not understand something, they know that they can ask their teachers for help.

Pupils are extremely polite and respectful. For example, in discussions, they allow each other time to speak. They are courteous to visitors. Pupils regard the school as a place where people behave well. They strongly disapprove of bullying and said that this is very rare. However, pupils trust their teachers to address bullying quickly should it ever occur. Pupils feel safe at school.

There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop personally. They especially enjoy singing and take part in events at the church and with other schools. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the many clubs and activities on offer. These are open to all pupils.

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

Leaders have given careful thought to the knowledge that they most want pupils to learn during their time at the school. They have designed a broad, ambitious and exciting

curriculum to enable pupils to learn this knowledge. In each subject, the curriculum is clearly organised from the early years to Year 6 in a logical order. This helps pupils to know more and remember more as they move through the school.

Subject leaders have strong subject knowledge. They provide useful training and guidance for all staff in their subjects. This enables staff to deliver the curriculum well for all pupils, including those with SEND.

Teachers provide interesting activities that help pupils to learn. These enjoyable activities keep pupils focused on their learning. Teachers check regularly in lessons to make sure that pupils understand. Extra help is provided quickly to pupils who need it.

In most subjects, leaders gather a range of information about how well the curriculum helps pupils to remember important knowledge over time. This enables leaders to make improvements to the curriculum if necessary. In a small number of subjects, leaders' work to gather such information is at an earlier stage. They do not have such a clear understanding of how the curriculum is helping pupils to learn in these subjects. This limits the work that they can do to improve the curriculum for pupils.

Leaders have put reading at the heart of the curriculum. Children in the early years learn about phonics as soon as they start in the Reception class. Children build up their knowledge of letters and sounds further as they move into key stage 1. Leaders and teachers make sure that reading books contain the sounds that pupils have learned. This enables pupils to develop secure phonics knowledge, including those with SEND. Older pupils are enthusiastic readers. They enjoy a wide variety of books. Pupils across the school learn to read well.

Staff and leaders work together to accurately identify pupils who may have SEND. Leaders communicate effectively with a range of professionals to secure expert support for these pupils if it is needed. Parents are fully involved in this process. Pupils with SEND achieve as well as other pupils in school.

Adults set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Children in the early years quickly learn when it is time to play and time to listen. Older pupils move sensibly and quietly around school. They do not disturb each other by chatting in lessons. This responsible behaviour makes an important contribution to pupils' ability to learn.

Pupils learn about diversity and difference within and beyond their community. They learn about a range of faiths and cultures. There are opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, for example, through the quiet reflection that they call 'Stilling Time'. Pupils develop an awareness of British values, such as democracy, when they vote for members of the school council.

Governors ask leaders plenty of challenging questions about their work to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. They are considerate of staff's workload and well-being. Staff said that they are proud to work at this school. Governors and leaders communicate well with parents. Parents expressed very positive views of the school in their responses to Parent View.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors and leaders ensure that all staff receive regular safeguarding training. Staff know how to recognise the signs of abuse and neglect. They know what action to take if they think that a pupil might be at risk from harm.

Leaders have established strong working relationships with a range of agencies, such as the local authority safeguarding hub, health professionals and attendance officers. This enables leaders to secure help for pupils and their families when needed.

Through the curriculum, pupils develop a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe when they are working online. Pupils know exactly what to do and who to tell if they see something on their computer or device that worries them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, leaders are at an earlier stage in their work to evaluate the impact of the curriculum over time, for example, through their use of information from assessments. This prevents subject leaders from identifying any necessary improvements to the curriculum, which might help pupils to learn better. Leaders must ensure that they develop a clear overview of the impact of the curriculums in all subjects, so that pupils have the best possible chance of knowing more and remembering more over time.

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 January 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	119527
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10256134
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	Chris Alder
Headteacher	Jo Fitzgerald
Website	www.ellelstjohns.net
Date of previous inspection	10 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher and a new deputy headteacher have been appointed.
- A new chair of governors has been appointed to the governing body.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative providers.
- This is a voluntary aided Church of England primary school and is part of the Diocese of Blackburn. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in April 2018.

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 leaders, and with members of the governing body. The inspector also spoke on the telephone to the school's improvement adviser.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with leaders.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. The inspector also spoke with staff to understand how they keep pupils safe.
- The inspector considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils. The inspector also spoke with some pupils about school life.
- The inspectors spoke with staff to discuss leaders' support for their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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