

Inspection of Little Heaton Church of England Primary School

Boardman Lane, Middleton, Manchester M24 4PU

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and children at Little Heaton Church of England Primary School are happy in school. They get on well together and make lots of friends. Pupils benefit from positive and supportive relationships with staff who pupils said are kind and helpful. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils, including children in the early years, learn that everyone should be treated with respect regardless of their differences. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), behave well in lessons and around the school.

Most pupils work hard in lessons and enjoy learning. However, in many subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because leaders have previously not ensured that the curriculum has been ambitious enough. Until recently, leaders' expectations of pupils' achievement have been too low.

Pupils told inspectors that the staff in the school are caring and will help them if they have any worries. Pupils also trust that if they reported any concerns about bullying, that staff would sort it out quickly.

Pupils appreciate being able to pursue their interests in some extra-curricular activities such as choir practice and sports clubs. However, some pupils do not benefit from a sufficient range of opportunities to enrich their wider development.

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

In the past, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is sufficiently challenging for pupils. Leaders are currently working to ensure that the curriculum is suitably broad and ambitious for all pupils, including those pupils with SEND. In most subjects, leaders have decided on the important knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which they should learn subject content. However, leaders have not made their expectations of what pupils should know clear enough in some subjects. In these subjects, teachers are hindered in their efforts to design learning.

Although subject curriculums set out ambitious aims, many have only been introduced by leaders recently. Some teachers have not had the support that they need to deliver curriculums consistently well. For example, some staff do not use assessment strategies effectively to check that pupils have learned earlier content. In addition, some subject leaders lack the knowledge and expertise to check on how well curriculums are delivered and to provide appropriate support to staff. As a result, teachers do not receive the guidance they need to deliver curriculums well. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in many subjects.

In contrast, leaders in the early years have planned a curriculum that ensures children make a strong start in the Reception Year. Staff have high expectations of what children can achieve and they focus appropriately on developing children's spoken language and vocabulary. Through their warm encouragement, staff ensure that children try their best and achieve well. This means that children are prepared well for the challenges of Year 1.

Leaders have placed a high priority on pupils learning to read well through a clearly structured phonics programme. Children learn phonics in daily lessons as soon as they begin in the Reception class. The books that pupils are given to practise their reading are carefully selected by staff to match the sounds that they know. This helps pupils to become more-confident readers.

Leaders keep a careful check on how well pupils know and remember sounds and staff provide extra support for those pupils who fall behind. This ensures that most pupils become fluent and accurate readers by the end of Year 2. Older pupils in key stage 2 develop their comprehension skills further through their exposure to carefully selected high-quality texts.

Leaders have ensured that there are effective systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with SEND early. However, staff have not received sufficient training to adapt their teaching approaches to support pupils with SEND to access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. From time to time, some pupils with SEND lose interest in their learning.

Most pupils behave well and show respect to each other and to the staff. Pupils' lessons are rarely disrupted by incidents of poor behaviour. However, some pupils do not benefit from a personal development curriculum that helps to develop their understanding of the wider world sufficiently well. This hinders their readiness for taking their place in a modern society.

Members of the recently appointed governing body have strong expertise and they are informed well about all aspects of the school, including the quality of the curriculum. They are determined and highly ambitious for pupils. Governors provide appropriate levels of challenge and support to school leaders in equal measure. Leaders have been supported well by external partners and there has been a considerable improvement to the quality of education for pupils. However, it is still early days.

Staff appreciate the approachability and support of leaders who are considerate of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular safeguarding training so that they can recognise the signs that may indicate that a pupil is at risk from, or suffering, harm. Leaders have a strong oversight of individual cases. They work well with other agencies to provide the support that vulnerable pupils and their families need.

Leaders ensure that the school's curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe in the community. For example, pupils benefit from sessions on how to ride their bicycles safely and attend workshops about the risks of anti-social behaviour.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' expectations of what pupils should know are not clear enough in some subjects. This hinders teachers when designing learning for pupils, preventing pupils from achieving as well as they should. It also hampers leaders and teachers in checking effectively that pupils know and remember the important content of subject curriculums. Leaders should ensure that they finalise what pupils should know and remember in these subjects from the early years to Year 6, so that teachers are clear about what pupils should be learning and when this should be taught.
- Some subject leaders have not provided enough guidance for teachers to deliver curriculums as intended. This means that some subject curriculums are not delivered well by staff, including checking on whether pupils' earlier learning is secure. Leaders should provide appropriate support for subject leaders so that they are equipped well to support teachers to deliver curriculums consistently effectively.
- Teachers have not received sufficient training adapt how they deliver the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils, including those with SEND. This means that many pupils with SEND struggle to access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Leaders should ensure that teachers are trained well to adapt their pedagogical approaches to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those pupils with SEND so that they can access the curriculum and achieve well.
- Pupils do not benefit from a coherent and well-planned curriculum to support their wider development. This means that pupils are not as well prepared as they should be for life in modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that pupils benefit from an age-appropriate personal development curriculum that supports them to take their place in a modern society.

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.

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	105812
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10226191
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kate Ford
Headteacher	Claire Crawford
Website	www.littleheatonce.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 and 11 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, an acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have been appointed.
- All members of the governing body have been appointed recently, including the chair of governors.
- School leaders do not currently make use of alternative provision for any pupils.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Manchester.
- The school's last section 48 inspection took place in November 2015.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school has 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 acting headteacher and other leaders. They also spoke with subject leaders and members of staff.
- Inspectors spoke with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority and with a representative of the Diocese of Manchester.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, during playtime and lunchtime and around the school. They spoke with different groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school, their learning, their behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They reviewed documentation, checked attendance information and spoke to leaders, governors, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and 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 reviewed samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also considered aspects of a number of other subjects on the school's curriculum.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers and considered their views shared through Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments received via the free-text facility. They also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation shared by school leaders, including the school development plan, the minutes taken at governors' meetings and leaders' self-evaluation document.

Inspection team

Janette Walker, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Clare Baron

Ofsted Inspector

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