

Inspection of a good school: St Wilfrid's CofE Aided Primary School Northenden

Patterdale Road, Northenden, Manchester M22 4NR

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 June 2024

Outcome

St Wilfrid's CofE Aided Primary School Northenden continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Helena Miller. This school is part of Thrive Church of England Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), John Barrett, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Good.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to attend this friendly and welcoming school. They look forward to their time spent learning and playing. The school has a strong community spirit, fostered in part through the close bonds that older pupils develop with their younger peers.

Pupils build warm and trusting relationships with staff. They are confident that staff will help them to resolve any issues that may arise. Pupils typically behave well, treating one another with kindness and respect. At playtimes, pupils enjoy participating in a variety of games and activities.

Pupils are proud to take on leadership roles that make a positive contribution to the school's community. Pupil leaders act as role models for their peers. They uphold and embody the school's values, such as forgiveness, compassion, and generosity. Pupils who are part of the school's 'courageous advocacy team' recently undertook a project to teach pupils about air pollution. They led a successful campaign to encourage more pupils to walk or cycle to school.

Pupils enjoy a variety of extra-curricular activities. For example, they attend sports clubs, including dodgeball, basketball and cross-country, as well as music, yoga, and cheerleading clubs. These rich opportunities help pupils to develop their talents and interests.

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

The school and the trust are united in their vision for pupils' education. This begins from the start of the early years, where the school has crafted a well-considered curriculum

with a strong focus on developing children's communication and language. This prepares children in the Nursery class for learning how to read. From the beginning of the Reception class, expert teachers deliver a highly effective phonics programme. Pupils practise reading regularly, using books that contain the sounds that they already know. Staff swiftly identify pupils who struggle with reading. The school ensures that these pupils get the additional help that they need.

In most subjects, the school has clearly defined what pupils should learn and the order in which this should be taught. It has thought carefully about how learning is organised over a two-year cycle, to enable pupils in mixed-aged classes to learn all that they should. Teachers benefit from regular opportunities to work collaboratively with their colleagues to design learning, which helps to alleviate workload demands.

Staff have completed suitable training that has helped to develop their expertise. For example, the school has recently supported teachers to sharpen their techniques to help pupils to remember their learning over time. This has paid dividends, as pupils are increasingly able to recall and build on what they have learned in the past. Nonetheless, some teachers do not check carefully enough on pupils' developing learning. This means that, at times, staff do not identify and address pupils' errors. These misconceptions can persist over time, which hinders pupils' future learning.

The school quickly identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils, as well as those who speak English as an additional language, are supported well. In the early years, staff go to great lengths to get to know children before they join the school. This allows staff to provide any additional help that children need to settle in. Teachers across the school are informed about the additional needs of pupils with SEND. They successfully adapt learning activities to allow these pupils to progress well through the curriculum.

The school has taken suitable steps to improve pupils' rates of attendance, particularly for those who are disadvantaged. It carefully scrutinises attendance information so that any trends or patterns are identified. The school works closely with parents and carers to ensure that pupils who are often absent are supported to increase their attendance levels.

The school sets clear expectations for pupils' behaviour, which pupils are keen to meet. Pupils feel that staff's use of rewards and consequences is fair. In the early years, children are taught social skills and positive behaviours. For example, staff teach them to take turns and to share equipment, such as balance bikes. They encourage children to use 'kind hands and kind words' when playing with their friends.

The school has designed a comprehensive programme to support pupils' personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils develop their knowledge across a range of topics, including how to keep healthy and safe. The school is committed to developing pupils' appreciation of the differences that exist between themselves and others. For example, pupils relish hearing about faiths and cultures of the wide range of speakers who visit from the local community. Pupils also benefit from a variety of trips that enhance their learning, such as recent visits to a cathedral and to a synagogue.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teachers do not check carefully enough that pupils have developed the knowledge that they should. As a result, some pupils have misconceptions that are not swiftly rectified, which hampers their subsequent learning. The school should train staff to accurately identify errors in pupils' understanding before moving their learning on.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2019.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142936
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10348335
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	329
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Good
CEO of the trust	John Barrett
Headteacher	Helena Miller
Website	www.thrive-stw.com
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Thrive Church of England Academy Trust.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.
- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Manchester. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in January 2024. The school's next section 48 inspection is due to take place within the next five years.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with senior leaders, including the headteacher and a range of staff. She also spoke with representatives of the multi-academy trust, as well as members of the local governing body.
- The inspector met with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation documents, improvement plans and minutes of trust and local governing body meetings. The inspector also reviewed records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. She observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, and geography. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some staff and with pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector met with curriculum leaders and reviewed pupils' work in some other subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Charlotte Oles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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