

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Leigh St John's CofE Primary

Kirkhall Lane, Leigh, Greater Manchester WN7 1RY

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 January 2025

Outcome

Leigh St John's CofE Primary has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leigh St John's is a happy place in which to learn. The school has a simple mission to help all pupils to be 'decent human beings'. This mission is lived out by staff and pupils alike. This inspires pupils to demonstrate exemplary attitudes towards their work. Relationships built on respect are the heartbeat of this excellent school. Leaders have created a culture that celebrates difference and includes everyone.

The school has established a curriculum that pupils find irresistible. Pupils are inspired by the activities that they are given. They secure deep knowledge across a wide range of subjects. The school deliberately enhances the curriculum with carefully chosen visits, for example a field trip to investigate rivers or a visit from a neurologist to talk about how the brain works. These opportunities inspire pupils' curiosity. Staff are ambitious for pupils. Pupils achieve extremely well.

Pupils' conduct and attitudes to their learning are exceptional. Pupils know that their learning will help them in the future, so lessons are calm and focused. If pupils struggle to manage their emotions, staff quickly help them to regulate their feelings and get back on track. The school helps pupils and their families to understand the importance of attendance. As a result, most pupils attend regularly.

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

School leaders have created a very ambitious curriculum for pupils to study. Teachers use their exceptional subject knowledge across a range of subjects to help pupils to deepen their learning. For example, in history, pupils explain the artefacts that show how stone-

age societies changed and became settled. When discussing design and technology, older pupils explain the effect of a counterweight in stabilising a motorised robot that makes drawings. In geography, pupils use their impressive map-reading skills to understand the physical and human features in the landscape.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive exceptional support. The school accurately identifies pupils' additional needs. Teachers adapt the delivery of the curriculum incredibly well to make sure that these needs are met. Pupils with SEND fully access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. All pupils learn well across the curriculum.

Teachers are highly effective in explaining new learning to pupils. They routinely check that pupils understand new content. This helps all pupils to practise new learning, increasing their confidence and fluency. In mathematics, for example, pupils use their secure understanding of place value to learn about decimals. In the early years, children quickly secure mathematical fluency through repeated practice. By the time they leave the school, pupils are very successful mathematicians.

Across the school, teachers deliver the curriculum skilfully. They address pupils' misconceptions swiftly and address any gaps in knowledge as they arise. Pupils of all ages apply their learning confidently to the tasks that they are given. They learn deeply over time.

From the beginning of their time in the early years, children receive expert tuition to learn how to read. Children master phonics quickly. They use the strategies that they are taught to read new books successfully. Older pupils receive a reading curriculum that enables them to securely access knowledge across the subjects that they study. Skilled staff provide precise support for the small number of pupils who struggle to read. This support helps these pupils to gain confidence. Pupils become fluent and expert readers. They appreciate the wide range of texts that they are given, which further inspires their curiosity to learn.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is well considered. Pupils develop an impressive understanding of how to stay safe online. For instance, they have a mature understanding of how activities online can leave a digital footprint. Pupils understand about difference and respect. They treat each other with care and kindness. Pupils said that everyone is welcome at this school.

Staff encourage pupils to be aspirational for their own futures. For example, the school's personal development offer includes a visit to a careers fair. Pupils draw on the exciting things that they have done in school to consider possible careers and future goals. They are highly motivated to achieve these goals. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in different clubs. Some participate in acting and dancing clubs, while others take part in the many sporting clubs on offer. These opportunities prepare pupils very well for their future lives.

Those responsible for governance know their school well. They use their experience to challenge and support leaders to continually improve the school. Governors check carefully that the school is taking the right actions in the best interests of all pupils. Staff value the way that they are supported, professionally and personally. This, in turn, allows them to focus their energy and expertise on providing every pupil with a high-quality education. Staff are very proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 outstanding for overall effectiveness in June 2019.

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](#)' 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	106517
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10348041
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kelly Partington
Headteacher	Emma Lightfoot
Website	www.leighstjohnsprimary.wigan.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The school runs a before-school and after-school club for pupils in the school.
- This school is part of the Diocese of Manchester. Its last section 48 inspection took place in March 2019. The school is awaiting confirmation from the diocese about the timing of its next section 48 inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers.
- The inspector held a meeting with governors, including the chair of governors.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 scrutinised a range of other documentation, including the school development plan and leaders' evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke informally to pupils to gather their views on school life.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector met formally with staff to gather their views about the school.

Inspection team

Jen Sloan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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