

Inspection of a good school: Emmanuel Holcombe Church of England Primary School

Helmshore Road, Holcombe, Bury, Lancashire BL8 4PA

Inspection date:

9 November 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being part of this small and welcoming school community. They are happy and safe in school. Pupils get on well with their friends and teachers. They are confident that leaders and staff will listen to any worries they might have. On the very rare occasions that name-calling or bullying happen, staff deal with these situations quickly and effectively.

Pupils live up to leaders' high expectations for their behaviour. They are extremely polite and respectful. Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and at playtimes. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around school.

Pupils appreciate the broad selection of clubs that staff provide. These range from gymnastics and choir to computing and chess. Pupils also enjoy regular educational trips and residential visits. Pupils like being given the chance to make a positive difference to school life. They said that they enjoy taking on roles such as being a faith ambassador or a member of the school council.

Leaders and staff are ambitious for the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, pupils' learning is not consistently strong across the school. Improvements in the teaching of phonics and reading are at an early stage of implementation and the delivery of the curriculum does not help some pupils to remember what they have learned.

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

The recently appointed acting headteacher and new senior leadership team have succeeded in establishing a sense of stability in the school following a period of turbulence. There are promising signs that their work is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning, but new initiatives have not had time to become fully embedded.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading and phonics. They have recently introduced a new phonics programme to make sure that phonics is taught consistently well and that the needs of pupils who may be struggling with reading are addressed more quickly. Staff and pupils have embraced the new materials with enthusiasm. However, staff are still developing their expertise in delivering the new phonics programme to enable pupils to become confident and fluent readers. They are also at the early stages of using assessment information to make sure that pupils read books that match their ability.

Leaders are ambitious that pupils should benefit from a broad and engaging curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. The knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn and the order in which this content should be taught is well thought out in most subjects. Staff use assessment strategies effectively to check how well pupils gain knowledge. However, while pupils can talk confidently about their learning, they are typically less sure when asked to recall or explain key vocabulary. This vocabulary has not been retained in pupils' long-term memory because some teachers do not ensure that pupils have the chance to revisit and recap their previous learning. Where this is the case, pupils' learning is less secure and it is harder for them to build on what they have already learned.

Leaders have begun to redevelop the school's early years curriculum. They have a good view of what they want children to learn across the different areas of learning. However, their curriculum thinking has not extended into linking children's learning in early years with what they will learn in Year 1 and beyond.

Leaders quickly 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.

Leaders carefully consider pupils' wider development. They ensure that pupils have opportunities to learn about the richness of modern British society. Pupils have a good understanding of equality and diversity and speak about the importance of treating everyone with kindness and respect. Leaders ensure that both pupils' physical and mental health are promoted well in school.

Pupils behave exceptionally well throughout the day. Lessons proceed with minimal disruption. Pupils' thoughtful behaviour and sensible attitudes make a positive contribution to learning throughout the school.

Governors know what is going well in the school and what still needs to improve. They are supportive of senior leaders' plans to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. Almost without exception, staff are highly supportive of the new senior leadership team. They feel that leaders and governors listen to their views and consider their workload and well-being when making decisions.

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 quickly report any concerns they have. Leaders work well with outside agencies to ensure that support is made available quickly when a concern has been identified. Staff make sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when working or playing online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The new phonics programme is in its infancy. Some staff do not have the expertise to ensure that this systematic approach to teaching reading is making a difference. This hinders pupils' reading fluency. Leaders should ensure that staff are suitably trained to shape phonics teaching to meet pupils' needs and to check that pupils are reading books that are matched to their phonics knowledge.
- Pupils struggle to remember key vocabulary. This makes their learning less secure. This is because teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to learn and recap key vocabulary across a range of subjects. Leaders should ensure that pupils are given sufficient opportunities to learn the key vocabulary identified in each subject so that it sticks in their long-term memory.
- Leaders have not identified how areas of the curriculum in the early years link to future learning in key stage 1. This makes it harder for pupils to build on their prior learning. Leaders should ensure that the links between the curriculums in early years and key stage 1 are clearly identified so that pupils are able to successfully develop their learning as they move from early years into key stage 1.

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 October 2017.

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

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| Unique reference number | 105338 |
| Local authority | Bury |
| Inspection number | 10256131 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 114 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Lisa Wilson |
| Acting Headteacher | Amy Longstaff |
| Website | www.emmanuelholcombprimaryschool.com |
| Date of previous inspection | 4 and 5 October 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The acting headteacher and chair of governors have both been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school is being supported by a local multi-academy trust.
- This school is part of the Diocese of Manchester. Its last section 48 inspection took place in November 2018.
- There is a breakfast club and an after-school club that are managed by the governing body.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection at the school 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.

- An inspector spoke to members of the governing body and to a representative of the local authority.
- 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 also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at further 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, including in the after-school club and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses to the staff surveys. An inspector also spoke with parents at the start of the school day. No responses to the online survey for pupils were received.

Inspection team

Neil Dixon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Clare Baron

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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