

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Kettleshulme St James CofE (VA) Primary School

Macclesfield Road, Kettleshulme, High Peak SK23 7QU

Inspection date:

16 January 2025

Outcome

Kettleshulme St James CofE (VA) Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils value being part of this welcoming school community. The school makes sure that new pupils receive effective support to settle quickly after they arrive. This is especially true for pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND). Pupils make many new friends. They develop strong and positive relationships with others. Older pupils are keen to help and support those who are younger.

Pupils are proud to belong to 'Team Kett'. They learn to appreciate their own uniqueness, as well as celebrating each other's differences. Pupils of different ages play and learn alongside each other happily.

The school ensures that pupils appreciate the school's local environment and community. Pupils enjoy learning about the special features of their rural location. They develop resilience and curiosity as they make effective use of the school's outdoor areas. Pupils embrace new experiences, such as relaxing in a hammock, making tools, building shelters or crafting, using natural materials.

The school has high expectations for pupils' academic success. Pupils typically achieve and behave well. They learn how to regulate their feelings and emotions, especially if they are feeling overwhelmed. Pupils are well prepared for their secondary phase of education by the end of Year 6.

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

The school has successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection. It now has a well-defined curriculum in place which outlines the key knowledge that pupils are expected to learn in all subjects.

The curriculum clearly sets out what teachers need to focus on with pupils as they progress from the Reception Year to Year 6. Pupils are increasingly able to remember what they have learned in different subjects. Their achievement across the curriculum is broadening and strengthening.

In some subjects, the curriculum is still very new. Teachers are developing their familiarity of its content. They do not deliver the curriculum in these areas with the same confidence that they do in reading and mathematics. This impacts on how clearly teachers present new information, or how effectively they support pupils to build on what they have learned before.

Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding in reading and mathematics. They notice and address any misconceptions or gaps in pupils' knowledge in these subjects adeptly. However, this is not as consistent in some other subjects. Occasionally, pupils become confused as a result. When this happens, some lose focus and become less receptive to learning.

Staff are usually successful in helping pupils to maintain positive attitudes to school. However, there are times when adults do not follow the school's behaviour policy as well as they could. When this occurs, the rate at which some pupils learn slows.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Staff are well trained and deliver the reading curriculum and phonics programme consistently well. Pupils enjoy reading and accessing the school's library. Older pupils develop sophisticated tastes in reading. They read to pursue their own interests as well as enhancing their learning across the curriculum.

Children in the early years respond well to the school's chosen phonics programme. By the end of Year 1, most pupils can use their phonics knowledge well to read unfamiliar words. Pupils become fluent and accurate readers. They enjoy practising reading with adults. Older pupils who find reading more difficult benefit from regular additional support for as long as they need it.

The school provides effective support for teachers to identify and address any particular difficulty that pupils may experience, such as SEND. As a result, staff support pupils with SEND effectively. These pupils achieve well.

The support for pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. This begins in the early years. Here, children build up confidence and independence rapidly. They are keen to help adults and each other, including within the school's effective buddy system. As pupils progress through the school, they develop a wide range of skills and knowledge

which stand them in good stead for later life. For example, pupils learn about the value of democracy and citizenship. Many hold leadership roles. Pupils enjoy making suggestions and discussing each other's ideas.

Staff benefit from the unswerving support that they receive from both the school and the governing body to ensure that their workload is manageable. However, governors are still developing their expertise in holding leaders to account in some aspects of the school's work. For example, they do not check carefully enough how consistently well some agreed policies and practices are implemented.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers are not as familiar with the content of the newly introduced wider curriculums as they are in reading and mathematics. As a consequence, at times, they do not check carefully enough that pupils have learned all that they should. This results in variability in how well some pupils build up their knowledge in different subjects. The school should ensure that it further supports teachers to deliver the curriculum as effectively as possible.
- At times, governors are too easily assured that the school is supporting pupils as well as it can. For example, at times, agreed policies and practices are not adhered to as well as they could be, including how well pupils are supported to focus on their learning. Governors should strengthen their expertise and processes for holding the school to account for key aspects of its work.

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 good 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 good for overall effectiveness in April 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	111459
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10348079
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	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Annette Scott
Headteacher	Alicia Bellshaw
Website	www.kettleshulmestjames.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 and 25 April 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has taken up post since the time of the previous inspection.
- A new chair of governors has been appointed since the time of the last inspection.
- The school has a religious character. It is part of the Diocese of Chester. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2019. Its next inspection is due within the next academic year.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club.
- The school currently uses four unregistered alternative provisions.

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 that the school 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 visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders of the curriculum.
- An inspector held a meeting with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector spoke with representatives from the local authority and from the diocese.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss SEND; the curriculum, including reading; pupils' behaviour and attitudes and the provision for pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils or for staff. However, inspectors gathered the views of staff and pupils through discussions during the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- An inspector visited the school's breakfast club.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ros Munro

Ofsted Inspector

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