

Inspection of Westhead Lathom St James' Church of England Primary School

16 School Lane, Westhead, Ormskirk, Lancashire L40 6HL

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| Inspection dates: | 4 and 5 February 2025 |
| The quality of education | Outstanding |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Outstanding |
| Personal development | Outstanding |
| Leadership and management | Outstanding |
| Early years provision | Outstanding |
| Previous inspection grade | Outstanding |

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since November 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for at this small, friendly school. They are happy and proud to be part of this very special community. Pupils flourish in the supportive environment that the school provides. They relish both the academic and social opportunities that they experience as part of this welcoming school.

Pupils develop a thirst for knowledge during their time at the school. They rise to the very high expectations the school has for their behaviour and academic success. Pupils are extremely well supported to become committed and curious learners. They are articulate when expressing their thoughts and ideas. Pupils work hard and achieve highly.

There is a culture of respect and tolerance across the school. Relationships are remarkably positive. Pupils and staff display great consideration and politeness towards others.

Pupils speak with pride about representing the school, such as at recent dodgeball and bench ball events. They are keen to share how they benefit from the vast array of trips and residential on offer. For example, by taking part in canoeing, climbing, visits to London and local landmarks, pupils gain a wealth of experiences that broaden their horizons. These opportunities help pupils to develop into well-rounded confident citizens.

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

Despite its many noteworthy strengths, this school is not complacent. It ensures that each curriculum subject has equal importance in pupils' learning. Staff are clear about what pupils will learn, from the moment they start in the Nursery Year, through to the end of Year 6. The school has identified meticulously the key knowledge that pupils should know in each subject. The school gives careful consideration to the order in which this knowledge should be taught. This supports the learning of pupils in the mixed-age classes. Equality of opportunity is at the heart of this school, and, as such, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) embrace the same excellent curriculum as their peers.

Staff identify any barriers to pupils' learning quickly. This starts in the early years, where children with SEND are supported to learn alongside their classmates. Staff are highly skilled in adapting the delivery of the curriculum for pupils. Pupils who need extra help benefit from well-tailored support programmes.

The school places the highest priority on ensuring that pupils learn to read with fluency and accuracy. In the Nursery Year, children get off to a flying start. Staff extend children's vocabulary skilfully. They develop their early language skills to great effect. In the Reception Year and key stage 1, staff are experts in enabling pupils to learn new sounds. Pupils who struggle to read benefit from well-matched additional support.

Pupils talk with passion and confidence about their reading. They particularly enjoy sharing books at the 'library café' and with 'masked readers' who visit their school. Older pupils are proud to earn 'fantastic book awards' for reading widely and often.

Across the rest of the curriculum, staff have considerable subject expertise. They embrace ongoing professional development. The care and diligence that staff place on designing learning enables pupils to develop the security of subject knowledge that they require to excel. Teachers carefully probe pupils' understanding of the topics that they have studied. Nothing is left to chance. They are quick to address any misconceptions that pupils may have.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite, courteous, and well mannered. Children in the early years demonstrate admirable resilience when they find tasks more difficult. They are absorbed in their learning.

A small number of pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. The school works closely with parents and carers, and, where necessary, external agencies to support these pupils to attend school more regularly.

Pupils discuss and consider topical issues with deep understanding and empathy. They have an impressive understanding of equality. Pupils respect the differences between themselves and others fully. They take great pride in their use of signing to sing and communicate together.

Pupil parliamentarians and school councillors debate and consider issues such as dog fouling close to the school grounds. They share their thoughts and views maturely regarding the proposed closure of the local swimming baths. Older pupils plan and lead playground activities for their peers. They also provide a 'worry club.' Pupils are taught to support each other to look after their mental health.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support that they receive from the school. This includes the consideration given to managing their workload and well-being. Governors are committed to the success of every pupil. They check on the school's work robustly to achieve this aim.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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| Unique reference number | 119377 |
| Local authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 10348170 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 100 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Paul Livesley |
| Headteacher | Helen Clark |
| Website | www.wlsj.lancs.sch.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 19 and 20 November 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection took place in October 2022. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in the academic year 2026 to 2027.
- The current headteacher was appointed in 2019.
- The governing body is responsible for the school's wraparound care provision.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, and history. For each deep dive, they had discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with subject leaders and with pupils about their learning in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body and spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with staff and leaders about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for attendance, behaviour, early years, the provision for pupils with SEND and pupils' personal development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 spoke with pupils about their experiences of school. They looked at a range of documents related to pupils' welfare and education. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Rebecca Jewitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Niamh Howlett

Ofsted Inspector

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