

St Oswald's Catholic Primary School

Montague Road, Liverpool, Merseyside L13 5TE

Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders' and governors' successful amalgamation of two very different schools has resulted in a strong culture of high expectation and high morale for pupils and staff at St Oswald's Catholic Primary School.
- Leaders and teachers have established effective systems for monitoring pupils' progress. This helps them to take prompt action for those pupils who are at risk of falling behind.
- Pupils learn well because the quality of teaching is good. Leaders have made sure that teachers have plenty of opportunities to share good practice and to develop strong subject knowledge. Teachers speak highly of the support that leaders provide.
- The learning that teachers plan enables pupils to make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress that disadvantaged pupils make is similar to and sometimes better than other pupils. Leaders know that sometimes the most able pupils make less progress, because teaching does not always challenge them sufficiently.
- Pupils conduct themselves extremely well around school. The strong relationships they have with their teachers contribute to the progress that pupils make.
- Governors ask leaders challenging questions, for example about pupils' progress and about how leaders make sure pupils are safe. As a result, they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and its priorities for improvement.
- The curriculum that leaders and governors provide enables pupils to learn across a range of subjects, and to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills in different ways.
- Governors and leaders have worked hard together to make sure that pupils can learn about diversity, and similarities and differences that exist between cultures and families. Governors do not ask leaders enough questions to enable them to monitor the impact of this work on pupils' learning.
- Children in the early years make strong progress. Many start Nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age. As a result of good teaching they catch up quickly. By the time they start Year 1, most have skills that are similar to those of other children nationally.
- Leaders and governors have established a strong culture of safeguarding in school. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know who to ask for help.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching routinely challenges pupils, especially the most able, to make consistently strong progress across all subjects
- Governors ask more challenging questions of leaders that will help them to monitor the impact of their important work in promoting pupils' awareness of diversity and difference.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors have worked tirelessly and with determination since the school opened in January 2016 in order to secure the successful amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools. Their shared vision has enabled them to overcome many challenges along the way, including staffing turbulence, redevelopment of the school buildings and a legacy of low attainment in key stage 1. As a result of their hard work, there is now a culture of high expectation and high morale across the school. This is having an impact on pupils' outcomes in all key stages.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the quality of education at the school. This has helped them to identify correctly the school's strengths as well as to see where it can improve further. As a result, their plans for improvement are focused on the right actions.
- The headteacher and senior leaders share a determination to raise pupils' achievement. This has motivated their staff team to do the same. The systems that leaders have established enable them to hold teachers to account for pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers say that they value the regular, detailed discussions they have with leaders about their pupils. This is because these discussions help them to take the right actions, for example when pupils are at risk of falling behind.
- Leaders and governors have made good use of the opportunities that the amalgamation has presented by enabling teachers and subject leaders to work closely together and to share their good practice across key stages. Subject leaders say that this is enabling them to develop a deeper understanding of standards in their subjects. Teachers who are newer to the staff team value the support and guidance they receive from their more experienced colleagues.
- Leaders ensure that teachers and subject leaders have opportunities to work with colleagues in other local schools in order to develop professionally. For example, teachers compare their own assessments with those of other teachers to ensure that they are as accurate as possible. Leaders have also made sure that teachers and subject leaders have access to training in order to improve their practice. This is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- Leaders and governors make effective use of the pupil premium grant. Consequently, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is improving in reading, writing and mathematics in all key stages.
- Good leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) enables pupils to make strong progress from widely varying starting points. Teachers plan appropriate adjustments to classroom learning and pupils access interventions in accordance with their particular needs. Leaders have established effective communication with a range of professionals and ensure that referrals are timely.
- The curriculum that leaders and governors provide enables pupils to learn and to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills across a range of subjects. Leaders recognise the wealth of opportunity for learning within their local area. They

have made recent changes to the curriculum to make learning more meaningful to pupils, for example in learning about historic events such as the Second World War. These changes are having an impact on pupils' motivation to learn. However, leaders know that sometimes in some subjects the most able pupils do not receive work that challenges them sufficiently.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear understanding of how well pupils are doing over time, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because they ask leaders for the right information, including about the progress of pupils who are disadvantaged. Governors know that there is still work to do to make sure that the most able pupils make the strong progress of which they are capable.
- Governors hold leaders stringently to account for the decisions they make, including their use of the pupil premium grant and the physical education (PE) and sport premium funding. As a result, they know that the quality of education is good and continues to improve.
- Governors and leaders have put a great deal of thought and care into ensuring that they promote equality and prevent discriminatory behaviour. They ensure that pupils have opportunities to learn about diversity, and about the similarities and differences in families. Governors do not ask leaders enough challenging questions to monitor the difference that this important work is making to pupils' understanding, so that they can readily identify any areas for further development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have succeeded in establishing a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. All staff are knowledgeable and vigilant, and know how to recognise the signs of abuse, neglect and sexual exploitation. This is because leaders have made sure that they have had appropriate training.
- Leaders and governors have made very effective arrangements for supporting the needs of pupils who are at risk of harm. Their good working relationships with a range of agencies enable leaders and teachers to report concerns and to secure help where it is needed.
- Pupils recognise the measures that leaders and teachers take to make sure that they are safe in school. They understand the importance of keeping the building secure, and that visitors to the school wear special badges if the headteacher has given them permission to enter. Pupils know who to ask for help, and feel safe as a result. One pupil told an inspector, 'We feel a thousand per cent safe.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan carefully to make sure that pupils learn well. Little time is lost in lessons because pupils know that teachers have high expectations for their conduct.
- Teachers build on what pupils have already learned in order to deepen their

understanding and to make sure that their knowledge and skills are secure. Teachers know their pupils well. They intervene in a timely manner where pupils are at risk of falling behind. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that their teachers, 'help you get through it if you're stuck and by the end of the lesson you thoroughly understand it'.

- Teachers use their subject knowledge to plan learning for pupils that captures their interests and makes them want to find out more. For example, pupils were motivated to learn more about the impact of war on their own city when teachers encouraged them to talk to members of their own families who could remember real events. Work in their books showed that their understanding deepened as a result.
- Pupils receive appropriate homework in line with the school's policy. Teachers provide pupils with feedback in line with the school's assessment policy. Pupils say that they understand this feedback and that it helps them to improve their work.
- Work in pupils' books shows that they practise their reading, writing and mathematics skills across a range of subjects. For example, pupils in key stage 2 write comparisons between the lives of people in ancient Greece and those in modern Greece. Sometimes teaching in some subjects does not provide the challenge that the most able pupils need to enable them to hone their skills sufficiently.
- Leaders and teachers have taken action to improve the quality of the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) for younger pupils and attainment is rising as a result, especially for disadvantaged pupils. Teachers' strong subject knowledge enables pupils to learn well. Consequently, when they encounter unfamiliar words in their reading books, they are able to use their skills to read them correctly.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their work. They enjoy using technology such as tablet computers to help them to research topics, and they collaborate to compare their findings with each other. They are motivated to keep improving their work by the rewards that teachers provide. For example, they talk with excitement about the awards of new pens and pencils for regular good work.
- Parents appreciate the information that the school provides about the progress that their children are making. They also value the information on the school's website about pupils' learning.
- Teachers expect pupils to be respectful to them and to each other and they challenge derogatory language in lessons and around school. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to learn about diversity, for example, through faiths other than their own.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The secure relationships with their teachers help pupils to make progress. Pupils told inspectors that the teachers at St Oswald's 'really care about you'.
- Pupils know how to stay safe online. Those who spoke to inspectors were able to draw attention to posters around the classrooms, reminding pupils of how to use the internet safely.

- Pupils say that bullying doesn't happen often, but that when it does their teachers will sort it out.
- Pupils develop socially, morally, spiritually and culturally through the experiences that teachers provide. They have opportunities to develop a sense of citizenship through roles of responsibility in school. They learn about fundamental British values such as democracy, for example, by taking part in elections to select the next head boy and head girl.
- Pupils have opportunities to learn about difference and diversity in the wider world, for example by learning about different religious faiths or cultures. Pupils are not always able to explain what they have learned about differences within families, for example where parents are of the same gender.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves extremely well around school, including at lunchtimes and in the playground. They show consideration for others, for example when walking in their class groups along the corridors, and are very polite to visitors. Pupils respond well to the high expectations that teachers set for their behaviour. As a result, low-level disruption is rare.
- Pupils are almost always attentive in class. They told inspectors, 'It doesn't help the teachers when we talk!' Very occasionally, pupils are less attentive because teaching is not sufficiently challenging.
- Leaders and teachers have worked hard to improve pupils' attendance at school, which has been lower than average in recent years. Their hard work has paid off. The school's records show that attendance has improved so much in the last 12 months that it is now above the national average overall. Attendance is also improving for disadvantaged pupils towards the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- 2018 provisional data indicates that standards had improved at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. More pupils attained the expected and higher standard than previously. Attainment at the expected standard was similar to the 2017 national averages, but lower than national averages at greater depth. Few disadvantaged pupils attained greater depth.
- Information from the school's assessments shows that pupils attained similar standards overall in the 2018 phonics screening check in Year 1 to those in 2017, which were broadly in line with those nationally. More disadvantaged pupils reached the required standard in the phonics screening check in 2018 than in the previous year.
- Provisional results of the key stage 2 national tests in June 2018 show that pupils made progress in reading, writing and mathematics that was broadly in line with the 2017 national average. The most able pupils made less progress than average in reading. A higher proportion of pupils overall than the provisional national average reached the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Outcomes in the

key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test in 2018 were in line with those nationally.

- Disadvantaged pupils made progress in key stage 2 in 2018 that was similar to that of other pupils nationally in reading and in mathematics, and just below average in writing. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in all three subjects and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling has improved towards the national average for all pupils since 2016/17, although very few disadvantaged pupils reached the higher standard in writing.
- Information from the school's assessments, together with work in pupils' books, shows that most current pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making strong progress from their individual starting points.
- Pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to achieve similarly good outcomes to those in 2018 in reading, writing and mathematics, and better outcomes at greater depth and in phonics.
- More pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach at least the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined than in 2018. Leaders know that where teaching is less challenging the most able pupils make less progress.
- The school's assessment information, backed up by work in books, shows that disadvantaged pupils currently in key stages 1 and 2 are making progress from their individual starting points that is similarly strong to that of other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Work in current pupils' books shows that pupils practise their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills across a range of subjects and are making strong progress. More pupils are on track to reach at least the expected standard in 2019, including disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Most of those who read to inspectors from both key stage 1 and key stage 2 did so with confidence and fluency. They understood the meaning of the text and used their skills to read words that were unfamiliar to them.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years provision at St Oswald's is good. Parents agree with this view.
- Since the school's amalgamation, leaders and managers have used a wide range of information to arrive at an accurate evaluation of the strengths and relative weaknesses of early years provision at St Oswald's. This has helped them to make important improvements that are having a positive impact on children's outcomes.
- Managers and staff know each child well. This is because they all contribute information from their observations as part of the assessment process. They make sure that their assessments are correct by testing out or 'moderating' their judgements with other schools and with representatives from the local authority. Leaders and managers are keen to explore ways of developing even further the overview they have of the progress that children make over time.
- Information from the school's assessments shows that outcomes in the early years are

improving over time. Children start Nursery at St Oswald's with skills that are generally below those typical for their age. The good teaching they receive enables them to make good progress. A higher proportion of children than the national average achieved a good level of development by the time they left Reception class in 2018, in readiness for Year 1. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are also improving towards the national average for all children.

- Children learn in a bright, stimulating environment that provides them with opportunities to learn both indoors and outdoors. Leaders and managers make good use of information from assessments to plan a broad range of activities that meet the needs of most pupils, and which help them make progress towards the early learning goals.
- Children learn well in the early years. Adults use questioning effectively to encourage children to think carefully. They model appropriate vocabulary, for example about the colours and textures of autumn leaves. This helps children to practise their speaking and listening skills, and to try out the new words they learn.
- Children behave well in the early years. They almost always listen carefully to adults and know what is expected of them. Even the youngest children remind each other that it is important to take turns. Very occasionally children listen less well where teaching does not stimulate or challenge their thinking.
- Children develop the ability to take care of their own needs because adults support them well. For example, during the inspection, children chatted happily to each other while they managed their own clothing on return from their PE lesson.
- Parents value the information that they receive about their children's progress and development in the early years. They say, for example, that teachers are 'welcoming, amazing and caring'.

School details

Unique reference number	142523
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10053505

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	628
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Anthony Hegarty
Headteacher	Mrs Mary Walsh
Telephone number	01512 288 436
Website	www.stoswaldsschool.com
Email address	office@st-oswalds.liverpool.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The school opened in January 2016 following its amalgamation from a predecessor infant school and a predecessor junior school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is larger than average.
- Most pupils attending the school are White British.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is other than English is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support for SEND is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below average.

- The school has its own nursery provision.
- The school operates a breakfast club from 7.45am each day.

Information about this inspection

- This is the school’s first full inspection since its amalgamation from two predecessor schools in January 2016.
- Inspectors observed learning in lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders, school staff and governors. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority and a representative from the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils in lessons, during breaktimes and at lunchtimes.
- Inspectors also spoke formally with groups of pupils, and spoke to some parents on arrival at school.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils’ work during lessons and work produced over time in a range of their books.
- They also listened to a selection of pupils reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at the latest school performance information showing the current pupils’ progress.
- Other documentation scrutinised included plans for school improvement, safeguarding information, behaviour logs, attendance records and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of 34 responses from parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and 31 responses to Ofsted’s free-text service.
- They also took account of 30 responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Daley	Ofsted Inspector
Eithne Proffitt	Ofsted Inspector
Ailsa Moore	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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