

# Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School

Brunswick Street, Parr, St Helens, Merseyside WA9 2JE

## Inspection dates

24–25 April 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders have worked tirelessly since the previous inspection to improve pupils' progress and raise attainment. Uncompromising, outstanding leadership ensures that all groups of pupils receive a good-quality education.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. They are confident that their children are safe and well cared for.
- The quality of teaching and learning in key stages 1 and 2 is good. Teachers and teaching assistants work together seamlessly, ensuring that pupils receive effective support.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Pupils apply their phonics skills and knowledge well to their reading and writing.
- The curriculum prepares pupils effectively for life in modern Britain. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective.
- Pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics is enriched by many trips and visits. However, some pupils do not develop their skills and knowledge in these subjects as well as they do in English and mathematics.
- Attendance has remained in line with the national average. Previously high rates of persistent absence have fallen significantly.
- Leaders meet the varied needs of the pupils exceptionally well. The promotion of pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They behave exceptionally well in lessons and when moving around the school because they have a genuine love of learning. Pupils are tolerant and sensitive to the needs of others. Strong behaviour management systems are understood by all and applied fairly.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress.
- Pupils' outcomes continue to improve. Pupils make good progress across key stages 1 and 2. They are prepared well for the next stages of their education. However, at times, the most able pupils do not receive enough challenge to enable them to excel.
- Early years provision is outstanding. The well-designed curriculum ensures that children make outstanding progress. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception Year has increased consistently over the past four years.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning further to ensure that:
  - the most able pupils consistently receive sufficient challenge to enable them to achieve as well as they should across a range of subjects
  - pupils' subject-specific knowledge and skills across the curriculum match their strong and improving achievement in English and mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher, staff and governors are determined that pupils should receive a high-quality education. Pupils have a love of learning and a love of life itself. The school's mission is lived out to the full. The first-rate support and good-quality teaching that pupils receive are raising aspirations and enabling pupils to, as the school's motto says, 'soar to new heights'.
- Leaders have worked relentlessly since the previous inspection to tackle weaknesses. They have been extremely successful in raising the quality of teaching and improving pupils' progress. Pupils' achievement, especially in English and mathematics, is now very strong. Incisive development planning ensures that all members of staff understand their role in ensuring that pupils benefit from an effective and memorable primary education. Staff are fully supportive of the headteacher and senior leaders. This was clear in the positive attitudes of staff who spoke to the inspectors and those who responded to the staff survey.
- The leadership of English is very effectively focused on improving pupils' progress and attainment. The leaders for writing and reading have put clear plans in place that are having a positive impact on pupils' learning experiences and outcomes. They have carefully considered the best approaches to the teaching of reading and writing. Detailed and frequent checks on the quality of teaching and the work in pupils' books help them to support staff to continually improve.
- The leadership of mathematics is equally effective. Leaders have worked through a range of processes to find the most suitable way to teach mathematics effectively. The leader for mathematics maintains a strong oversight of the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Pupils now benefit from an approach to mathematics teaching that develops mastery and fluency. The mathematics curriculum is sequenced well, ensuring that pupils develop skills and knowledge logically over time.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have worked effectively to develop the roles of middle and subject leaders across the school. Subject leaders are well supported by senior leaders. They are given time to check the quality of teaching and pupils' work in their areas of responsibility. Leaders champion their subjects exceptionally well.
- In the past, pupils with SEND did not have support that was appropriate for their needs. This has improved under the leadership of the deputy headteacher. In this role, she has worked tirelessly with the headteacher to address all historical weaknesses in the provision for pupils with SEND. With the support of teachers, leaders now accurately identify and address the many and specific learning needs of pupils. As a result, staff proactively engage with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils receive support that meets their individual needs.
- Much curriculum time has been spent on improving pupils' basic writing, reading and mathematical skills so that these are consistently good. This means that for some pupils, their subject-specific skills and knowledge in other subjects are not as well developed. Nonetheless, this is improving quickly through the broad and balanced curriculum on offer. The many trips and visitors to the school enrich pupils' experiences

and enhance their learning.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. There is a sharp focus on developing pupils' breadth of experiences. For example, each year, pupils experience a classical music concert by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Pupils in key stage 2 learn to play a brass instrument and many continue this through small-group tuition. Leaders are highly alert to the many cultures and nations represented in the school. The hall is adorned with many flags to represent the diverse mix of ethnicity and cultures that gel as one harmonious community at Holy Spirit. This enables pupils to be proud of their identity and to develop respect and tolerance for others. Pupils develop strong social and moral values. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make strong progress and attain well by the time they leave the school. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils continues to rise year on year. Leaders are acutely aware of the barriers to learning that many pupils face. They use the additional funding well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make the same progress as other pupils nationally. They are as well prepared as others in the school for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular and sporting activities. The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used well to raise levels of participation and extend experiences for pupils. Pupils enjoy expert coaching and the many clubs offered. For example, they can play football or netball, learn to dance or participate in cheerleading. They regularly engage in competitions with local schools.
- Parents are very supportive of the school leaders. They appreciate the efforts of staff in ensuring that their children do well. Leaders know the families well. As a result, families and pupils receive timely and appropriate levels of support.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors are fully supportive of the school's leaders. They receive regular and accurate reports from senior and middle leaders about many aspects of the school's work. They use this information well to challenge leaders and to ask probing questions. They hold school leaders to account for the performance of the school.
- Governors recognise the school's many strengths and where further improvements can be made. They have created a detailed plan outlining their visits to the school. They share the findings from their visits with other governors to ensure that they have a continuous and accurate oversight of the school's effectiveness.
- Governors have a detailed understanding of how additional funding is used to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND make good progress.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have a deep and thorough understanding of the contextual risks posed to pupils. They are vigilant and alert to the varied needs of the pupils. They have put

effective plans in place to ensure that staff have a critical awareness of potential signs of neglect. All records relating to safeguarding are detailed.

- As the designated safeguarding leader, the headteacher is tenacious in ensuring that pupils receive timely and appropriate interventions. Strong relationships have been forged between staff, pupils and their families.
- As well as basic safeguarding training, staff have been trained to be aware of and alert to the emotional well-being of the pupils. They have also received 'Prevent' duty training to help them spot potential signs of radicalisation.
- Staff and pupils work alongside the police and a number of national charities to further develop their knowledge of risks and safeguarding practices.
- The strong safeguarding culture in the school is evident in pupils' awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They know about the potential dangers of social media and that they should not share personal information.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved significantly since the last inspection. The considerable improvements in this area have enabled pupils throughout the school to make significantly better progress than in the past, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Teachers have a deep understanding of the English and mathematics curriculum that they teach; they are highly skilled at planning pupils' learning in these subjects. The high-quality training that staff have undertaken has contributed strongly to the purposeful and successful teaching across the school. Teachers understand the misconceptions that pupils are likely to have, and they take pre-emptive action to ensure that these do not become barriers to learning.
- The teaching of mathematics is highly effective. Teachers are skilled at sequencing pupils' mathematical learning. They ensure that pupils of different abilities have a secure understanding of important mathematical principles. As a result, most pupils are able to complete mathematical calculations with confidence and fluency. This, in turn, enables pupils to develop their mathematical problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- Pupils are supported well to develop their writing. Teachers adopt a consistent approach to teaching pupils writing throughout the school. Pupils are helped to understand the features of different types of writing. They are also supported to develop the technical accuracy, fluency and depth of their writing. Pupils write well for a variety of different audiences and purposes. They are encouraged to edit and refine their work in response to teachers' feedback.
- The teaching of phonics is very effective. Pupils apply their skills well; this helps them to become enthusiastic and fluent readers. They enjoy reading for pleasure and teachers ensure that pupils read texts that are appropriate for their age and reading ability.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together seamlessly to ensure that the needs of pupils are met. They explain new content clearly to pupils and help them to understand new knowledge through thoughtful questioning. Adults are particularly effective at

providing extra support to those pupils who find learning more difficult.

- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are resilient and show an admirable determination to produce the best work possible. Pupils support and encourage each other and they enjoy warm and respectful relationships with teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils of all abilities are supported to make strong progress. Pupils of low and middle ability are provided with support that is particularly well matched to their needs. The most able pupils are also well supported. However, they do not receive the consistent challenge that would enable a greater proportion to reach greater depth or the higher standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils benefit from a rich variety of opportunities to enhance their learning in subjects beyond English and mathematics. High-quality displays promote and celebrate pupils' learning. For example, as part of work in history, the promotion of women's rights and the suffragette movement are celebrated well. Pupils produce excellent work in art and design. Many examples of pupils' artwork adorn the walls of the school. However, leaders have not paid as much attention to the development of the curriculum in subjects beyond English and mathematics. As a result, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are not as well developed in subjects such as history, geography and science.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. It underpins the many improvements that have been made across the school since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have created a warm, inclusive and nurturing environment that enables pupils to flourish. Staff are caring and compassionate. They go to great lengths to attend to pupils' individual needs. As a result, pupils feel valued and well cared for.
- Pupils receive exemplary support to regulate their emotions and behaviour. They are encouraged to think positively and are helped to develop and maintain high levels of self-esteem. This reflects the high priority that leaders attach to the development of pupils' emotional well-being. Those pupils who experience challenges relating to their mental health receive excellent support. For example, the school's counsellor and learning mentor provide tailored support to individuals and groups of pupils.
- Pupils are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles. They benefit from regular advice on diet and nutrition. All pupils are provided with free healthy snacks throughout the school day. Some pupils are members of a healthy cooking club and leaders work with an outside agency to support families to eat healthily. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to exercise and the benefits of such activities are made clear to pupils.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of different forms of bullying, including that which takes place online. They value the work that is undertaken to educate them about the harmful effects of bullying. They say that bullying is rare, and that staff are skilled at dealing with it on the rare occasions that it does happen. Pupils said that staff stop

bullying 'almost before it begins'.

- Pupils have a thorough understanding of different types of risks to their safety and well-being. For example, they benefit from extensive guidance on e-safety. They receive regular advice from different agencies. For instance, the representatives of the fire brigade led sessions on the dangers associated with fireworks.
- Pupils are supported to become well-rounded individuals. Almost all pupils participate in extra-curricular activities that develop their sporting, creative and academic talents.
- Pupils are given opportunities to become leaders and support their peers. For example, 'peer listeners' are responsible for helping other pupils who experience difficulties or who are having a bad day.
- Leaders have adopted a proactive approach to developing pupils' aspirations. Pupils graduate from the 'Children's University' once they have achieved some key milestones. Pupils also develop an understanding of different careers through an annual careers and hobbies fair.
- Pupils are highly effective learners. They understand that learning is fun and rewarding but also hard work. They are self-motivated and committed to improving their work. They are thoughtful and considerate of others when discussing and debating different issues.
- Parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were clear that pupils are safe and well cared for in school.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils have a thorough understanding of the whole-school behaviour policy because it is applied consistently across the school. Pupils said that their teachers are fair and listen to their concerns. Pupils are aware of the consequences of poor behaviour and enjoy earning points for good behaviour.
- Pupils' conduct around school is exemplary. They are polite and courteous to adults and to each other. Pupils appreciate the calm and tolerant learning environment that leaders have created. They are very aware that some pupils have significant learning needs and are sensitive to their behaviours. Leaders use a wide range of highly effective de-escalation strategies to help pupils with challenging needs.
- Pupils move around school in a calm and sensible manner. The older pupils set an outstanding example to the younger pupils in their conduct around the school. They enter the dining hall sensibly and enjoy spending time with their friends. At playtimes, the older pupils provide support as they listen to the worries of others.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons. They get to work quickly because they enjoy learning. They relish work that challenges them.
- Parents and pupils who responded to the Ofsted surveys were overwhelmingly supportive of the behaviour systems.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. Rates of persistent absence have fallen sharply to be in line with the national average. Leaders

have engaged with the local authority education welfare officer to continue to improve this aspect of their work.

- Leaders have put a wide range of support in place through the learning mentor to ensure that vulnerable and difficult-to-reach families are provided with effective support to further improve their children's attendance at school.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Good

- Leaders have worked relentlessly to bring about strong improvements in pupils' outcomes. The progress that pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 has improved year on year. In 2018, pupils made progress in reading, writing and mathematics that was above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils leaving key stage 1 having achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics has improved over the past three years.
- Most pupils leave Year 1 having reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check. As a result, they gain a firm foundation on which to build as they progress through the school.
- Assessment data and work in pupils' books indicate that pupils in every year group are making good progress in English and mathematics. While the most able pupils make good progress overall, they are capable of achieving more. They are not consistently challenged to reach greater depth or the higher standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND make good progress because they are challenged appropriately. Where a small number of pupils with SEND make less progress, leaders ensure that they receive excellent support to help them to catch up in their learning.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics because this subject is taught in a logical sequence. Pupils benefit from many opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills in different contexts.
- Pupils' writing achievement is strong. Evidence in pupils' books indicates that they apply their skills well both in English lessons and in written work in other curriculum areas.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They read well and like to discuss their favourite authors. Across the school there is a real buzz and thirst for reading. The promotion of reading is highly evident across the school.
- Pupils' work in some other curriculum areas is not as well developed as their work in English and mathematics. This is because leaders have worked hard to improve pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics. A broad and exciting curriculum has been implemented and it is enriched with many practical experiences. However, pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects such as science, geography and history do not match their very strong gains in reading, writing and mathematics.



## Early years provision

## Outstanding

- Children in early years make outstanding progress. For several years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception Year has continued to rise.
- The vast majority of children enter Nursery with skills that are much lower than those typical for their age. By the end of Reception Year, children make outstanding progress. Children leave early years well prepared for key stage 1.
- Children do exceptionally well because the teachers plan an interesting and engaging curriculum. The learning environment has been carefully designed to enable the Nursery- and Reception-aged children to work and learn in close partnership. Activities are planned thoughtfully to engage and excite the children. Children in Nursery benefit from playing, learning and working alongside the older children.
- Children are inquisitive. They particularly enjoy exploring the outdoor learning environment. They sustain their concentration while engaging in their learning.
- The teaching of phonics is very strong. Teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled. Effective routines enable the children to read well and apply their skills to their written work.
- Children enjoy challenges. For example, they enjoy using identification charts to find different types of insects outside. They use their magnifying glasses to make careful observations while discussing what they have found with their classmates.
- Evidence in children's learning journals shows that they make outstanding progress in writing and number recognition.
- Children enjoy their handwriting lessons. Leaders have given careful consideration to the teaching of handwriting. Those who find writing a challenge are supported well to develop their fine motor-control skills.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They are attentive and sensitive to the needs of others. They respect and listen to the views of others. They take turns and share resources well.
- Children are taught to manage risks well because adults include them in the identification of risks. For example, they work with adults to identify litter or surfaces that may be slippery. Children move around the classroom and the outdoor environment with care. They are aware of how the different areas of learning have been organised and what they need to achieve.
- Teachers measure the progress of children carefully. Their records of children's achievements are detailed. Thorough and detailed assessments, along with high-quality work, are testament to the outstanding progress that children make.
- Parents are actively encouraged to provide additional evidence of 'wow' moments from home in the form of 'leaf a note' which is added to the tree, celebrating successes. Parents are also kept well informed of the progress of their children through the electronic learning journals.
- The leader of early years works in close partnership with senior leaders. Together they have drawn up incisive and detailed development plans to further improve the early

years provision.

- Leaders' risk assessments are thorough, ensuring that children remain safe. Safeguarding is effective and the statutory welfare requirements are met.

## School details

Unique reference number	132188
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10087853

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	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Justin McCauley
Headteacher	Michelle Ravey
Telephone number	01744 678670
Website	<a href="http://www.holyspirit.st-helens.sch.uk">www.holyspirit.st-helens.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:holyspirit@sthelens.org.uk">holyspirit@sthelens.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 January 2017

## Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school with a 52-place nursery.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The school most recent section 48 religious education inspection took place in June 2014.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. They also met with subject leaders and class teachers. Inspectors held meetings with representatives of the archdiocese and the local authority. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups, alongside senior leaders in some instances.
- Inspectors scrutinised examples of pupils' work from across the curriculum. They met with pupils and heard them read. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour and conduct throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation and development plan. They examined records of pupils' performance and assessments. They scrutinised records in relation to safeguarding and child protection.
- Inspectors considered the 39 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 26 free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also considered the 23 responses to the staff survey and the 73 responses to the pupil survey.

## Inspection team

John Donald, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Will Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector

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