

# Inspection of a good school: St Werburgh's and St Columba's Catholic Primary School

Lightfoot Street, Hoole, Chester, Cheshire CH2 3AD

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Inspection dates:

13–14 November 2019

## **Outcome**

St Werburgh's and St Columba's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy school. Leaders and teachers have high expectations of every pupil. Those I spoke with said that their teachers and friends make them feel safe. They also told me that there is no bullying. Pupils are aware of the potential dangers of using the internet. They have a good understanding of prejudice-based bullying, which they said never happens in school because 'everyone is treated fairly and respected for who they are'.

Pupils are conscientious and exceptionally well behaved. They are attentive in class and follow instructions closely. Their positive attitudes to learning help to support their good achievement in a range of subjects including reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils enjoy participating in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They enjoy playing the guitar, keyboards and various brass instruments including the trumpet. Pupils take their responsibilities as eco-council members and house captains seriously. Older pupils are good role models for their younger peers. They regularly work together to raise funds for local charities.

Pupils enjoy visiting local places of interest, such as Chester Cathedral. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 6 look forward to their annual visit to Conway, where they engage in residential learning and adventure activities.

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

In St Werburgh's and St Columba's School, leaders have developed a curriculum which has Christian values, pupils' academic and social interests and safeguarding at its centre.

Their well-planned curriculum helps to ensure that pupils make strong progress in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects. Pupils' attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling is especially strong. Teachers organise the curriculum carefully to

ensure that pupils' knowledge develops over time. Leaders and teachers have worked hard to ensure that other subjects, such as geography, art, science, design technology and physical education, are well developed. However, computing and history require further refinement.

Leaders and teachers are determined to ensure that all pupils, including children in the Reception classes, acquire the skills they need to become confident readers. Those in danger of falling behind are identified early and supported well. Most pupils have strong phonics skills, and all pupils read daily. Pupils told me that teachers bring books to life by adding suspense and humour to their reading.

In history, teachers plan a curriculum which engages pupils. Visits to places of interest, including Chester and visits from 'Romans' aid pupils' understanding of the topics that they study. However, some pupils cannot put important historical events into chronological order. Others find it difficult to remember important facts and events.

The teaching of computing is improving. Leaders and governors have invested resources to support the teaching of computing. In addition, the new subject leader is clear about what needs to be done to improve pupils' learning. However, key stage 2 pupils' computing skills are not as strong as they should be, particularly in coding. Some pupils told me that computers were sometimes slow at saving work and performing simple operations.

Teachers and teaching assistants are trained well and adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff work closely with the special educational needs coordinator to make sure that pupils are fully engaged in learning. As a result, pupils with SEND make strong progress in their learning.

Staff ensure that children in the early years are well provided for. Children are safe, curious and cooperative. They benefit from a stimulating curriculum that supports their strong progress in reading, writing, mathematics and phonics. Children behave exceptionally well, especially during story time. Those I observed demonstrated a thorough understanding of the book they were reading and accurately defined words such as 'almighty', 'terrified' and 'shocked'.

Pupils' behaviour in class and when moving around the school is exemplary. Staff help pupils to become caring members of society, older pupils are good role models for their younger peers. Pupils regularly participate in after-school clubs. They enjoy dance and drama, 'bush-craft', choir, football, netball and tag rugby. Pupils are active citizens who put their leadership skills to good use on the school council.

Staff morale is high. Teachers told me that they are given ample time to learn from best practice within the school and further afield. Those new to teaching told me that support from leaders helps to improve their teaching. All those who completed the inspection questionnaire said that leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders and governors put a very high priority on safeguarding. Safeguarding leaders are trained to a high standard and ensure that thorough procedures are in place to ensure that children are safe. Pupils know that if they have a concern or are worried, they can talk with staff at any time. Appropriate checks are made on all adults who work with pupils at the school.

Staff work closely with various agencies to ensure that children, including the most vulnerable, receive the support they need as and when this is necessary. Staff are skilled at spotting potential signs of abuse and/or neglect. They ensure that pupils are aware of the dangers and risks of using the internet, including child exploitation and radicalisation.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is delivered effectively overall, and most subject leaders are trained to a high standard. In addition, leaders have implemented curriculum plans in reading, mathematics, writing, science and other subjects which carefully sequence subject content and allow pupils to revisit what they have already learned and build on their skills and knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that other areas of the curriculum, such as computing and history, are developed to a similarly high standard.
- Pupils' skills in some areas of computing, such as coding, are limited. Leaders should ensure that the right equipment is available to help pupils make strong progress in all aspects of computing and that teachers are trained to teach all aspect of the computing curriculum effectively.
- Aspects of the history curriculum are strong. Some pupils have a good understanding of the periods they are currently studying. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils can remember facts and features about Victorian England. However, the pupils I met in Years 2, 3 and 4 were unclear about their previous learning. They remembered little about the Great Fire of London and life in Tudor times. Leaders should ensure that their plans to develop how this subject is taught are implemented swiftly so that pupils are able to learn more and remember more.

## 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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or

the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged St Werburgh's and St Columba's Catholic Primary School to be good on 3–4 June 2015.

## **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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111384
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	10087719
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	324
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Sharon Daltrey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kathryn Oates
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stwerburghscolumba.cheshire.sch.uk">www.stwerburghscolumba.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3–4 June 2015

## Information about this school

- Several members of staff have been appointed since the previous inspection, including five teachers, two newly qualified teachers and 11 teaching assistants.
- The governing body has been reorganised. New members have been appointed, including the chair of the governing body.
- In April 2018, the school was inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the quality of religious education and the Catholic nature of the school.

## Information about this inspection

- I met with six governors, including the chair of the governing body. I held telephone discussions with a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese. I had a meeting with the school's independent consultant.
- I met with the headteacher and leaders responsible for reading and phonics, history and safeguarding. I held meetings with the staff who oversee the provision in the early years and that for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- I took account of 94 free-text comments submitted during the inspection and 102

responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I considered responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by 20 members of staff and 14 pupils.

- I focused deeply on reading, history and computing during the inspection. In each subject, I met with the subject leader and spoke with teachers. I visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning.
- I met with pupils, teachers and other staff. I talked about safety, personal development and behaviour. I also talked with parents about matters relating to safeguarding.
- I scrutinised the school's safeguarding policy and related policies and documentation. I checked the school's records of the suitability of staff to work with children.

### **Inspection team**

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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