

# Inspection of a good school: St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Highfield South, Rock Ferry, Birkenhead, Merseyside CH42 4NE

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Inspection dates: 11–12 March 2020

## Outcome

St Anne's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this welcoming and friendly school. They are happy and cheerful. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. A typical comment was, 'My child is challenged and is making excellent progress. The clubs are just fabulous.'

Staff have high expectations of pupils. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They behave well. Some staff join in with pupil activities during breaktimes and lunchtimes. This helps to develop strong relationships in the school. Pupils want to learn. They support each other well during lessons.

Pupils' social, emotional and mental health are a high priority to leaders. The 'calm and connect time' each morning enables pupils to have the opportunity to reflect on their learning. This helps them to be ready for the rest of the day.

The pupils that I spoke with said that they feel safe in school. They said that bullying is rare, and when it does occur is sorted quickly by staff.

Pupils take part in a wide array of activities, such as sport, school plays, the school choir and residential visits. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about recent trips to a theatre, a museum and a farm.

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

Leaders and governors want the very best for every pupil in the school. Leaders have developed a broad and rich curriculum. Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and a wide range of other subjects.

Staff teach phonics from the very start. However, over recent years, too many pupils have not reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Leaders have responded to this by improving the phonics programme. Staff have benefited from training opportunities to improve their teaching of phonics. Pupils receive extra support to

help them catch up quickly. That said, some reading books that pupils use are not closely matched to the sounds that they know. Leaders have recently bought new books which are better matched to pupils' phonics knowledge, and are rolling them out this term.

Older pupils said that they enjoy reading and often read in school. Most pupils become confident and fluent readers by the end of key stage 2.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers and teaching assistants know these pupils well. Pupils with SEND participate in all aspects of school life and achieve well.

In mathematics, topics are taught in a logical order. This helps pupils to develop their mathematical knowledge as they move through the school. Children in the early years develop confidence in number through using a range of practical equipment.

Most other subjects are well planned. In science, pupils have opportunities to build their knowledge through memorable trips and visitors to school. Pupils carried out a project with Chester Zoo on using palm oils. This allowed them to revisit their learning on habitats and develop a better understanding of the impact of deforestation. Children in the early years have lots of opportunities to explore scientific concepts, such as mixing of colours and finding out which objects float and sink. Leaders know that teachers' planning in some subjects, such as history, is not as detailed as it should be. Pupils are not given the opportunity to study some topics in sufficient depth.

Leaders have improved the early years curriculum. The indoor and outdoor areas provide a range of opportunities for children to build on what they already know. This helps them to achieve well across different areas of learning. Children in the early years make stronger gains in their learning than they have in the past.

Pastoral support for pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils who have difficulty in managing their emotions are well supported. The atmosphere around the school is calm and orderly. In lessons, pupils respond well to teachers' instructions and concentrate well.

Pupils' attendance is rising. It is close to the national average. This is because leaders follow up absences quickly with families. Leaders also use rewards to celebrate pupils' good attendance.

Pupils celebrate different religious festivals. This helps them to develop tolerance and respect for others. They are keen to take responsibility, for example, as school councillors and antibullying ambassadors.

The headteacher has galvanised staff members into one team. Staff are proud to work at the school. They reported that leaders and governors are considerate of their workload and well-being.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all appropriate checks on staff are made before they start to work at the school. Appropriate training ensures that staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. Staff know how to spot possible signs of abuse and know how they should respond if they have any concerns. Leaders follow up any concerns quickly. They work well with a range of external agencies to support potentially vulnerable pupils. Parents and carers and staff say that the school is a safe place to be.

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

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

- Leaders have strengthened the planning and delivery of the phonics curriculum. They have recognised that some pupils are given reading books that are not closely matched to their phonics knowledge. Consequently, some books are too hard or too easy for them. Leaders have already taken positive steps to tackle this issue by purchasing books which are more closely matched to pupils' phonics knowledge. They should now implement the new approach so that pupils' reading skills continue to improve.
- The curriculum is well developed in most subjects. However, in some subjects, such as history, pupils are not given the opportunities to study topics in enough detail and depth. Leaders should implement their plans to review teachers' planning for these subjects to ensure that pupils can build their knowledge over time. This will help pupils to know 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 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 the school to be good on 8–9 June 2016.

## 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 the school and 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>	105088
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122126
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	229
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mary Tyrrell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lorraine Prescott
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stannes.wirral.sch.uk">www.stannes.wirral.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8–9 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The current headteacher was acting headteacher at the time of the previous inspection. She was appointed in a substantive role from April 2017.
- A new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2017.
- Leaders and governors have gained permission from the Department for Education to change the school's age range, from three to 11 to two to 11, from September 2020. The school is about to embark upon a building programme to enable it to accommodate provision for two-year-olds.
- St Anne's is a Roman Catholic school. Its last section 48 inspection took place in November 2015.

## Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, and groups of subject leaders and staff.

- I met with six members of the governing body and with the school's improvement partner. I also met with a representative of the Diocese of Shrewsbury and spoke with a representative from the local authority on the telephone.
- I spoke to pupils about their experience of school, and their views on behaviour and bullying. I also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- I reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and attendance records. I also looked at minutes of governing body meetings.
- To inspect safeguarding, I looked at safeguarding policies and reviewed the school's record of checks on the suitability of staff and governors. I met with the designated safeguarding leaders. I also spoke to pupils and staff about safeguarding, and considered parents' views.
- I spoke with parents before school to gather their views. I considered the five responses to Ofsted's free-text service. I also considered the 29 responses to the staff survey and 26 responses to the pupil survey.
- I did deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and science. I visited a sample of lessons in these subjects, met with subject leaders, reviewed pupils' work and photographic evidence, and had discussions with teachers and a small group of pupils. I observed staff listening to pupils read.

## **Inspection team**

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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