

Inspection of a good school: St Paul of the Cross Catholic Primary School

Milnthorpe Road, Chapel Lane, Warrington, Cheshire, WA5 4PN

Inspection date: 7 July 2021

Outcome

St Paul of the Cross Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy at St Paul of the Cross. Those pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they enjoy coming to school and that they feel part of the community. Pupils work hard and develop resilience in their learning.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have every opportunity to succeed. This is because governors, leaders and staff have high ambitions for them. Parents and carers commented positively about what the staff do for their children. Parents value the family ethos of the school and the caring attitude of all staff.

Pupils behave well around school and at playtimes. They attribute this to how everyone looks after each other. Those pupils who spoke to inspectors said that any arguments between friends or bullying incidents are sorted out quickly by staff. Consequently, pupils feel safe and well cared for. The vast majority of parents who shared their views with inspectors agreed that pupils feel safe at school.

Pupils enjoy the many clubs on offer, including the sewing club and Bible explorers club. Through community activities, such as providing food to the local food bank, pupils recognise what it means to contribute to their local area and to be part of the wider world.

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

Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education provided for pupils.

Leaders have revised the curriculum, including in early years, to ensure that it is ambitious and challenging. The curriculum clearly sets out what pupils will learn in a logical order from early years to Year 6. This allows teachers to build on what pupils

already know in most subjects. As a result, pupils achieve well in a range of subjects. To ensure the success of the curriculum, leaders have prioritised staff training to develop teachers' subject knowledge. This has built teachers' expertise and confidence.

Teachers use assessment information well in most subjects. This allows them to adapt the curriculum plans to build on pupils' prior learning. However, in some subjects, this is not the case. In these subjects, pupils do not deepen their understanding as well as they should.

Staff know pupils' needs well, especially those pupils with SEND. The special educational needs coordinator helps staff to adapt their plans effectively for pupils with SEND. Staff make sure that all pupils access the full curriculum. This ensures that every pupil has the same opportunities to succeed.

Children learn phonics as soon as they start in early years. They have opportunities to practise their phonics knowledge in a range of activities, including in the Nursery Class. Pupils who struggle to read receive help from skilled staff. This helps them to catch up quickly. The books that pupils read at home match the sounds that they are learning. Pupils apply their phonics knowledge accurately when reading unfamiliar words. Over time, they become confident and fluent readers.

Teachers develop pupils' love of reading. Older pupils talked enthusiastically about the books that they have read from the school library and classrooms. They read widely across a range of subjects. For example, they enjoy books linked to science and history. They value the new books that leaders purchase. Pupils who spoke to inspectors explained that their vocabulary has improved because of the time they spend reading. This has helped them to improve their writing and comprehension skills.

Pupils can focus on their learning because they are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. They have the opportunity to contribute to the life of the school as school councillors. The curriculum also enables pupils to develop a secure understanding of different religions and cultures.

Staff appreciate how leaders consider their workload and well-being. They value the training that leaders have put in place to support them in delivering the ambitious curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture of safeguarding is strong. Leaders work effectively with many pupils and families who need extra help and support. Staff receive up-to-date training and know how to record and communicate any safeguarding concerns. Teachers know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil.

Leaders prioritise the safety of the whole-school community. Staff provide opportunities for pupils to learn how to be safe, both online and within the local context.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of subjects, assessment information is not used well enough to build on pupils' prior learning. This means that pupils are not able to deepen their knowledge in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that the assessment system in a minority of subjects is developed and embedded. This will allow teachers to adapt curriculum plans more effectively in these subjects so that learning builds on what pupils already know and can do.

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 outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 12 and 13 July 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 [here](#).

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

Unique reference number	111367
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10194783
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	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mrs Helen McNicholas
Headteacher	Mrs Clare Abram
Website	www.stpaulofthecross.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 – 13 July 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Paul of the Cross Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school. It is a member of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection took place in February 2015. Due to the impact of the pandemic, the next section 48 inspection is overdue.
- The Nursery Class opened in February 2020.

Information about this inspection

- This is the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and their school life. Inspectors spoke with members of the governing body, representatives from the local authority, a representative from the Archdiocese of Liverpool, the headteacher and members of staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including safeguarding and checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.

- Inspectors considered the 23 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also considered 19 responses from the online staff survey and six from the pupil survey.
- Inspectors looked in depth at reading, mathematics and science. This entailed discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visits to lessons, looking at examples of pupils’ work and listening to pupils read.

Inspection team

Simon Hunter, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Christine Howard

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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