

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

Sandy Lane, Lydiate, Liverpool, Merseyside L31 2LB

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 October 2021

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending St Gregory's Catholic Primary School. They spoke enthusiastically to the inspector about many different aspects of school life. They said that they feel happy and safe at school.

Leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and academic achievement. Pupils respond extremely well to these expectations. They listen respectfully to adults and their classmates, settle quickly to work and display very positive attitudes to learning. They behave very well around school and trust staff to keep them safe. On the very rare occasions when bullying happens, pupils report it, and teachers deal with it quickly. Classrooms at St Gregory's are attractive, calm and cheerful places to learn.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that enhance their personal development. Excellent use is made of the school's attractive and extensive grounds. Pupils enjoy having their own gardening area in which flowers, fruit and vegetables are grown. Pupils are delighted that a wide range of after-school activities have restarted, including sports clubs and choir. Older pupils relish the responsibilities that they have in the pupil leadership team and as buddies for younger children. They are proud of the work that they have done to raise money for charities such as the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development.

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

Leaders have put a great deal of thought into developing a curriculum that is ambitious and tailored to meet the needs of the 'St Gregory's Child'. The curriculum is based on the national curriculum but also reflects the context of the local area. It is enhanced by well-thought-out additional activities, such as school trips and residential visits.

Ensuring that pupils become fluent and efficient readers is a key priority at St Gregory's. Staff in early years focus strongly on building children's early language skills as part of a well-planned curriculum. School leaders have refined the approach to teaching phonics to

ensure that it is clear and systematic. Staff are well trained. They deliver the phonics programme well. Teachers match books carefully to pupils' phonics ability and younger pupils read simple texts accurately. This helps them to become confident readers. Great importance is placed on giving pupils a love of reading. Teachers share high-quality texts with their classes and pupils speak with great enthusiasm about their favourite books and authors. Throughout the school, classrooms have well-stocked and attractive reading areas which pupils can access and enjoy.

In most subjects, including English and mathematics, leaders' curriculum plans clearly identify what pupils should know and remember by the end of each year. Subject leaders have worked effectively with staff in early years to ensure that the curriculum in the Nursery and Reception classes links effectively into Year 1. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. This helps them to deliver the planned curriculum effectively. Work in pupils' books, and on display around the school building, show that pupils' learning in most subjects is building well over time.

In a small number of subjects, the curriculum plans are less precise in identifying the key knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn year on year. This is reflected in pupils' books. Although there are still some impressive individual pieces of work in these curriculum subjects, pupils are less able to build on what they know.

Leaders have effective processes in place to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils receive the support that they need to access the curriculum. This helps them to achieve well.

St Gregory's is a calm and happy place, where learning proceeds without disruption. Pupils across the school, including children in early years, show a real keenness to learn. Staff said that they are proud to work at the school and that they feel appreciated by school leaders. Leaders make sure that staff's workload is manageable. Initiatives such as 'chocolate Wednesdays' help to maintain high staff morale.

Pupils are provided with a broad range of opportunities to enrich their learning, including residential visits, educational trips and a variety of extra-curricular clubs. The school has a strong tradition of sporting success in local competitions. Pupils learn about different world cultures and religions. They understand the importance of appreciating diversity and showing respect for all. Almost all of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey were full of praise for the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Staff are clear about the need to keep a careful lookout for any potential signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Staff are fully trained in the procedures for keeping pupils safe. Record keeping is thorough. The school has developed good working relationships with those outside agencies who are able to provide support for pupils who need it.

Pupils explained confidently how their teachers have taught them to keep safe, including when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not identified the precise knowledge and vocabulary that they want pupils to learn. This means that pupils are not able to consistently build on what they already know. Leaders should refine curriculum plans in these areas to make sure that teachers know exactly the key content on which to focus when delivering the curriculum.

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, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2011.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

Unique reference number	104936
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10199649
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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Terry Freeman
Headteacher	Deborah Albon
Website	http://www.stgregorysprimary.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	10 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Gregory's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school. It is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection took place in September 2016.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, and other school leaders, including the deputy and assistant headteachers and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector also spoke to members of the governing body, representatives of the local authority and Archdiocese of Liverpool, and the school's external improvement adviser.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, geography, and art and design. These deep dives involved discussions with subject

leaders and teachers, visiting lessons and talking to pupils about their work in these subjects. The inspector also looked at curriculum plans and pupils' work. He observed a number of younger pupils reading to their teachers.

- The inspector looked at curriculum plans and examples of pupils' work in other subjects.
- The inspector made checks on the school's records of the recruitment checks on staff and spoke to staff about the school's processes and policies for safeguarding pupils.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around school, including at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents through the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. This included the free-text responses. The inspector also considered the responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Neil Dixon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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