

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

Adswood Road, Huyton, Liverpool, Merseyside L36 7XR

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 October 2021

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive at St Aidan's with a smile on their face. They are greeted warmly by leaders and staff. Parents and carers know that this sets a positive tone for the school day ahead. Teachers support pupils to always be 'ready, respectful and safe'.

Leaders ensure that pupils are safe in school. Pupils know that they can approach any member of staff if they have any worries. Pupils told the inspector that name-calling or bullying is very rare. If it does occur, staff deal with it straight away.

Pupils understand the high expectations that staff have of them. Pupils work hard and behave well. They are motivated by a system of rewards that can lead to tea and scones with the headteacher.

Leaders provide pupils with a range of experiences at St Aidan's. There are a variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs available to take part in. Pupils can take on the responsibility of being a school councillor, a member of the 'Sports Crew' or a reading ambassador. Pupils are proud of their charitable work. They have recently raised funds for 'Mary's Meals'.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They have ensured that there is a broad and balanced curriculum in place to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps most pupils to achieve well across a range of different subjects.

Curriculum leaders have an accurate view of their subjects. They have produced plans that build on pupils' learning from the early years. In most subjects, teachers provide pupils with experiences beyond the classroom. This is helping pupils further develop their knowledge and enjoyment of subjects. For example, in physical education (PE), pupils

regularly take part in a variety of sporting competitions with other schools across the borough. This is enabling them to apply practised skills in real-life situations.

Until recently, a small number of subjects were less well developed. Staff had been unable to access training for these subjects due to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant that teaching in these subjects was less effective. Subject leaders have ensured that staff are now receiving the training to put these subjects back on track.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of reading. They have ensured that staff are appropriately trained. Children develop their vocabulary through songs, rhymes and stories as soon as they enter the Nursery class. They listen attentively to their teachers. As a result, children get off to a flying start. Across the early years and key stage 1, teachers' well-planned sessions are developing pupils' phonics knowledge effectively. However, the books that pupils read do not always closely match the sounds that they know. A few pupils struggle to read many of the words. This is impeding the rate at which some pupils can become fluent readers.

Pupils enjoy reading. They can choose from a range of texts in their well-stocked classroom library or the main school library. Older pupils explained that they love listening to their teachers read to them. Teachers use carefully selected texts to engage pupils in comprehension activities. These are helping to develop pupils' skills and confidence. Pupils throughout key stage 2 are able to use a range of complex vocabulary in their work across the curriculum.

Pupils behave well across the school. They are well-mannered and hold open classroom doors for visitors. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. In the early years, children quickly establish effective classroom behaviours. This is preparing them well for their learning in key stage 1 and beyond.

Leaders and teachers quickly identify the specific needs of pupils with SEND. Staff are trained to meet these needs effectively. As a result, teachers are able to adapt their teaching so that pupils with SEND are included in all learning. They achieve as well as others in the school.

Pupils understand the importance of tolerance. They have a wide knowledge of other faiths and cultures. Pupils can maturely discuss the negative impact of racism in society. They explained that 'in our school, everybody is accepted'.

Leaders welcome the challenge and support that governors provide. Governors check to ensure that pupils are receiving the education and experiences that they deserve. Staff are proud to be part of the St Aidan's family. They appreciate the care and consideration that leaders show for their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the pupils and their families well. Leaders ensure that all staff are regularly trained in safeguarding. Staff are vigilant to any changes that may give them cause for concern. All staff are encouraged to report any concerns, no matter how small. Leaders work effectively with outside agencies to provide support for families where appropriate.

Teachers ensure that pupils are alert to any dangers in their local area. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, both outside school and online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The books used to help some younger pupils learn to read are not always matched closely enough to the sounds that they know. This means that they are spending too much time having to decode the majority of the words in a book. As a result, their ability to become a fluent reader, and their understanding of the text, is being hampered. Leaders need to ensure that books are more carefully matched to the sounds that each pupil knows.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 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 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	104463
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10200000
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	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Hudson
Headteacher	Michael Boland
Website	www.staidanscatholicprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 September 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed.
- This is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school. The school had its most recent section 48 inspection in January 2016.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The governing body manages the before-school club provision.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and two members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and PE. This involved visiting lessons with subject leaders, discussing curriculum plans, talking to pupils and teachers, and looking at pupils' work.
- The inspector held discussions with the subject leaders for history and art and design. He also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- The inspector considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, and spoke to parents at the start of the school day. He also reviewed the responses to the staff survey.
- The inspector observed pupils’ behaviour at playtimes, lunchtime and during lessons. Pupils also talked to the inspector about their views on their school.
- 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 his evaluation.

Inspection team

John Tomlinson, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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