

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

Steers Croft, Stockbridge Village, Liverpool, Merseyside L28 8AJ

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 November 2021

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

When pupils arrive through the school's gates, they are welcomed into a safe haven. They grow in confidence and make strong gains academically and emotionally. Pupils feel happy and safe because of the excellent relationships they have with staff. They said that staff genuinely care about them.

The school's vision, 'to learn, love and serve', threads through everything. Leaders and staff work hard to support pupils, families and the local community. Parents and children from all faiths and cultures are welcomed at the school. One parental comment, typical of many, stated that they always 'feel part of a family at the school'.

Leaders, governors and staff set high expectations for themselves and for pupils at the school. They are determined that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), will achieve to the best of their abilities. Leaders try their best to open the door to pupils' dreams and aspirations. Pupils value this and do their best to rise to this challenge.

Pupils enjoy the many responsibilities that they hold in school, like being a prefect or councillor. They see these roles as a way that they can make a difference. Pupils understand what bullying means. They know that if it should occur, staff will deal with any incidents quickly.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum which has pupils at its heart. They have thought carefully about what pupils need to know so they have the knowledge they need in order to succeed. Curriculum plans make clear how pupils' learning will build on what they already know. This helps pupils to know more and remember more.

Subject leaders are ambitious and knowledgeable about their subjects. They provide support for other staff to make sure they have the knowledge and skills that they need. In most subjects, leaders know how well pupils achieve. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in a

small number of subjects in the wider curriculum, plans are quite new. In these subjects, leaders have not been able to check if these plans help pupils to know and remember more.

Similarly, in most subjects, assessment is used well by staff to plan relevant activities that build on what pupils already know. Staff carefully plan activities for pupils with SEND, so they can access the same learning as their peers. Staff are quick to spot when pupils may need extra help. This means that pupils achieve well in most subjects.

However, in the few subjects where curriculum plans are quite new, the use of assessment is at an early stage of development. Systems to check how well pupils are learning the curriculum over time are not fully in place. This means that staff do not check what pupils remember from what they have been taught in previous years. In these subjects, pupils do not always build on what they already know.

Leaders are determined that every pupil will learn how to read well. They have carefully selected texts to develop pupils' love of reading across the curriculum. Children learn phonics when they start in the Reception Year. Staff are well trained in how to teach phonics. They match books well to pupils' abilities. Effective support is put in place quickly for any pupils who need to catch up. Leaders' focus on this subject ensures that pupils achieve well.

Most pupils behave well and enjoy their learning. When some pupils find it hard to manage their behaviour, staff are skilled at supporting them. This means that there is little disruption to learning.

Children get off to a strong start in the early years. Relationships between children and staff are caring and supportive. This helps children, especially children in the two-year-olds' provision, to settle quickly. The early years curriculum has been skilfully planned by leaders and staff. They have made sure that every opportunity is taken to develop children's speech and language skills. Staff also provide a wide range of activities that help develop children's early reading, writing and mathematics skills.

Leaders have made sure that pupils' learning goes beyond the academic curriculum. Teachers plan trips and visitors come to the school, to bring learning to life. For example, pupils talked with excitement about the recent visit from a gorilla. Pupils are caring. They want to help others. They enjoy raising money for charities and helping at local food banks.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel well supported and respected by leaders and governors.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that keeping children safe is a key priority. They have ensured that the curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to recognise and manage risks. They know pupils and families well, and are aware of risks in the local community. Leaders use this information to plan training so that staff can help to manage any concerns.

Staff act quickly if they have any doubts about pupils' safety. They work well with other professionals to make sure that pupils and families receive help when it is required.

Parents said that their children are safe, happy and well cared for.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of foundation subjects, curriculum plans have only recently been implemented. Leaders have not yet evaluated the quality of these curriculums. This means that they do not know how well pupils achieve in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that these subject leaders have opportunities to check how well the new plans are being implemented. This will help subject leaders to know whether plans are having the intended impact on pupils knowing and remembering more.
- The use of assessment is at an early stage of development in some foundation subjects. As a result, staff do not check what pupils have been taught in previous years. Leaders should review and refine assessment systems in these subjects. This will help to ensure that pupils' learning always builds on what they already know.

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 December 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	104467
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10204436
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Potter
Headteacher	Lorraine McEvoy
Website	www.stalbertsprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers provision for two-year-olds.

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 the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders and the business manager.
- The inspector also spoke with a group of governors.
- The inspector considered a range of safeguarding documents, including the school's central record of staff and visitors, records of safeguarding and samples of the records kept on individual pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and music, and talked with leaders of these subject areas. The inspector also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes, and watched pupils as they moved around the school.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- The inspector looked at responses to Ofsted Parent View to find out parents' views of the school.

Inspection team

Julie Barlow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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