

Inspection of St Theresa's Catholic Primary School

Cannon Street, St Helens, Merseyside WA9 4XU

Inspection dates: 30 November and 1 December 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this happy, friendly school. They are kind and respectful to adults and to each other. Pupils live out the school's mission 'to do the little things well'.

Pupils work and play harmoniously together. They behave well. Children in the early years learn to take turns and to share. Pupils said that adults deal with any bullying quickly and effectively. They appreciate the support that staff give them when they are worried or upset. This helps pupils to feel safe and well cared for in school.

Staff nurture pupils' different talents and interests. Pupils perform on stage at the local theatre, compete in football tournaments and learn to play the ukulele.

Pupils enjoy supporting charities, such as the local food bank. They take part in events to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people and for refugees, as well as shining a light on mental health issues. The pupil forum listens to classmates' views. They work with leaders to make the school an even better place to play and learn.

Pupils enjoy the different subjects in the curriculum. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and achieve well. Frequent quizzes help pupils to remember and to recall their learning. Pupils progress well across the curriculum.

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

Leaders have developed a broad and ambitious curriculum that is tailored to meet the needs of pupils, including children in the early years. Subject leaders are passionate and knowledgeable. They have devised subject curriculum plans that set out clearly the essential knowledge that children and pupils should know and remember.

Many curriculum plans, such as mathematics and English, are well established. Teaching staff are highly competent and confident in delivering these curriculum plans. This is also true in the early years, where children's communication, language and early mathematics knowledge are developed well. Children and pupils progress well through these subject curriculums.

A small number of other curriculum plans have been put into place more recently to match the quality of the English and mathematics curriculums. The implementation of these newer curriculum plans has been disrupted by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that teachers have only been able to follow these new plans since September 2021. Even so, pupils, including children in the early years, achieved well across the predecessor curriculum.

Subject leaders have made sure that staff have had the training and support needed to plan and deliver learning well in these recently revised subjects. Teachers have

thought carefully about how they organise lessons so that pupils understand and remember new learning. It is early days. It is too soon to gauge the difference that these new plans are making to pupils' learning. It is unclear if pupils are gaining a deeper body of knowledge across the full range of subjects. However, subject leaders are closely monitoring how these new plans are working and have already made some refinements to the design.

Pupils love reading. Children in the early years enjoy joining in with songs, rhymes and stories. Older pupils listen attentively to the class novels that their teachers read to them.

Across the early years and key stage 1, phonics is taught effectively. Teachers use small-group and individual support sessions well. Teachers are successful in helping pupils who find learning and remembering phonics more difficult to catch up quickly. Leaders check pupils' progress closely. Leaders visit phonics sessions regularly to provide help and support to those teaching staff delivering the sessions. This makes sure that staff deliver the programme consistently well.

The school is calm and orderly throughout the day. Children in the early years learn and socialise well together. Pupils attend school regularly. There is effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who sometimes find it harder to manage their behaviour. These pupils learn effective strategies to regulate their own behaviour over time.

Leaders are adept in identifying the additional needs of pupils with SEND. They are particularly aware that any additional needs children in the early years have may have been missed during the COVID-19 pandemic. They work well with other professionals to make sure that thorough assessments are carried out. Leaders ensure that suitable provision is in place so that pupils with SEND access the curriculum and wider school life alongside their peers.

Pupils care deeply about those who they feel are treated differently because of their race or sexuality. They champion equality both in school and beyond. Many pupils take part in the clubs and activities offered by the school. Leaders encourage pupils to develop their talents and interests. For example, some pupils have exhibited their artwork in a local gallery, while others have taken part in a poetry festival.

Staff feel appreciated and well supported by leaders. They feel that their ideas and opinions are listened to and acted on. Staff appreciate the time and training that they receive to help them to do their jobs well.

Governors carry out their responsibilities diligently. They are critical friends for leaders, providing appropriate support and challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff undertake frequent safeguarding training so that they understand their roles and responsibilities. Staff report and record any concerns in a timely way. All staff are trained to identify and support pupils who may experience peer-on-peer abuse.

Leaders make sure that any concerns are followed up appropriately. They work well with external agencies to make sure that pupils and their families get the help and support they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy through the school's personal, social and health education programme. This includes how pupils can keep themselves safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some curriculum plans have only recently been introduced. This means that leaders cannot be sure whether these curriculum plans are effective in raising pupils' achievement further. Leaders should monitor the delivery of the new plans to ensure that they help pupils to build a deep body of subject knowledge across the whole curriculum.

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	104823
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10199359
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	Philip Swanson
Headteacher	Sara Johnson
Website	www.sttheresascatholicprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2007, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school had its most recent section 48 inspection in October 2014.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders and class teachers. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of the local authority and the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Inspectors met with the chair of governors and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the free-text responses. They also spoke to several parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and Ofsted's pupil survey.

- Inspectors met with those responsible for safeguarding at the school. They scrutinised a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with staff, parents and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at playtimes. They spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, art and design, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, reviewed curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning, and reviewed samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and they have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.

Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, 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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