

Inspection of a good school: St Richard's Roman Catholic Primary School Atherton

Flapper Fold Lane, Atherton, Manchester M46 0HA

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 January 2022

Outcome

St Richard's Roman Catholic Primary School Atherton continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a strong sense of community at this school. It is a happy and welcoming place for pupils to learn and thrive.

Pupils recognise that staff care for them. They said that they feel very safe. Pupils are confident that if they have any problems or concerns, they can go to a member of staff. They said to the inspector, 'We know that adults in school will always sort things out straight away.'

Staff have high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff successfully ensure that pupils achieve well. Pupils said that they enjoy their learning. They find activities interesting and fun. They particularly relish being challenged in their work.

Pupils are well-behaved. They know how to spot bullying. Pupils and their parents and carers said that bullying is dealt with quickly if it does occur.

The school is a hive of activity. Pupils experience a wide range of clubs, such as mindful colouring, book worms and model-making. There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to contribute to the wider life of the school. For example, pupils benefit from being a play leader or becoming an eco-warrior. There is something for everyone to do and enjoy.

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

Leaders have created a broad, interesting and ambitious curriculum. They have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn and how to get the best out of them. They have ensured that in all subjects the curriculum is well planned. This includes the curriculum in the early years. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education and for life in modern Britain.

Leaders have carefully set out the knowledge that teachers will teach, and the order it will be taught in. Staff think deeply about the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils need to succeed academically. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2, and children in the early years, progress well through the curriculum.

Teachers' enthusiasm for the curriculum motivates pupils. Pupils said that they appreciate how teachers make learning exciting. Teachers, including those in the early years, explain new ideas clearly. They are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. Teachers help pupils to revisit and recap important learning. They use a range of appropriate strategies to ensure that pupils make secure connections between new and previously learned concepts and ideas.

In most subjects, teachers use assessment strategies well to establish what pupils know and can do. Generally, teachers are successful in using this information to inform the next steps in their teaching. For example, teachers appropriately check for gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in one or two subjects, leaders do not ensure that teachers use assessment strategies effectively enough. In these subjects, this can prevent some pupils from achieving as highly as they could.

Reading is important at this school. Leaders have ensured that there is a rich and varied supply of appropriate books. Regular story times and access to books in all classes support pupils in developing a love of reading. Pupils said that reading 'helps you learn new words', and that it is 'good for your mind'.

Pupils get off to a good start with learning to read. Teachers deliver the phonics programme well. In the Reception class, children quickly get to know letters and sounds and learn how to blend them together to make words. This approach continues systematically throughout pupils' first years in school. Most pupils become confident and capable readers by the time they leave key stage 1. Those pupils who struggle to read benefit from additional support from well-trained adults. This builds their confidence and fluency.

Staff identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND in an accurate and timely way. Pupils with SEND are given the support they need to access the curriculum and they experience success.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen carefully to instructions and engage well with their teachers and with each other. Working well together is valued by everyone. Pupils are keen to help their classmates, for example if they are stuck or do not understand an activity.

Leaders successfully prioritise pupils' wider personal development. Staff provide pupils with many opportunities to live out the school's values, such as forgiveness and kindness. Teachers also develop pupils' spirituality well. Pupils share kind thoughts about each other and write touching prayers that are testament to their ability to reflect on issues such as peace and compassion.

Leaders and governors have established a strong and supportive team. Governors are experienced. They hold leaders fully to account for the quality of education that the school provides. Staff are extremely proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff and governors are well trained to identify and support pupils at risk. The procedures in place for reporting concerns are understood well by all staff.

Leaders are strong advocates for vulnerable pupils and their families. Where safeguarding needs are identified, support is timely. Leaders engage well with external agencies.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including how to manage risks when online. For example, pupils learn about online bullying and can clearly describe how to stay safe online and in the local community. Pupils know what to do if they have a concern about their safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In one or two subjects, teachers do not use assessment strategies as effectively as they could to check how much knowledge pupils know and remember. This hampers some pupils' achievement. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are confident in using a range of assessment strategies across all subjects. This is so that pupils learn as much as they can across the whole 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2017.

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	106498
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10211161
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Catherine Price
Headteacher	Dawn Nulty
Website	www.saintrichards.wigan.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 January 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Roman Catholic school is voluntary aided. It last had a religious education inspection carried out under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in February 2019.
- The school uses one alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. The inspector spoke with the headteacher, who was also the temporary special educational needs coordinator. The inspector talked to the assistant headteachers and held discussions with staff, which focused on the well-being and safeguarding of pupils.
- The inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She spoke with two representatives of the local authority and a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The inspector reviewed a range of

documentation, including that relating to school improvement, safeguarding and the checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.

- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the responses received via the free-text facility. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector talked with pupils about the books that they like to read. She also heard pupils read.
- The inspector looked in detail at early reading, mathematics and history. For each of these subjects, she held discussions with curriculum leaders and teachers, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work and talked with pupils. She also considered other subjects across the curriculum.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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