

Inspection of St Alban's Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Wadworth Street, Denaby Main, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN12 4AQ

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 January 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is in the process of significant change. There are strengths around behaviour, conduct, early years and the opportunities for pupils to develop character. However, pupils currently do not achieve as highly as they could in all areas of the curriculum. Where the curriculum is less developed it does not help pupils to remember what they have learned effectively. Nonetheless, the quality of education is improving.

Pupils are happy and say they feel safe. They know that if they have a worry there is an adult to talk to. During outdoor breaktimes, pupils get along well with each other. Play leaders from Years 3 and 6 support younger pupils with games. Pupils enjoy the outdoor play equipment that is available, particularly the recent addition of the mile track.

Pupils understand how they are expected to behave. They listen attentively in lessons. They know how to take turns and allow others to learn without disruption. Pupils move around school sensibly and calmly. Pupils are polite and courteous. However, they find it difficult to talk confidently about their learning and what they like about school.

Pupils know what bullying is. They are confident that if it did happen, staff would intervene swiftly. Leaders have developed the pastoral team to help more vulnerable pupils and provide family support. Staff and pupils have strong, positive relationships.

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

Senior leaders know what is required to improve the school. They have plans in place to address historic weaknesses. Some of the changes that they have made have had an instant impact, such as improvements to the learning environment. However, more time is needed for changes in the curriculum to impact on pupils' achievement.

Leaders are ambitious and determined that pupils will achieve well. Leaders have identified that changes to the curriculum need to be made. At present, the curriculum is not structured well enough to help pupils acquire the knowledge they require. Pupils cannot remember what they have learned, and they find it challenging to apply knowledge they know. The order in which pupils are learning is not helping them build a secure foundation of knowledge.

Leaders provide a broad curriculum and efforts are being made to ensure that it is delivered consistently well. Where the choice of subject content is strong, pupils respond well and are enthusiastic in their learning. However, at times where teacher knowledge is less strong, it can lead to a poor choice of activity or inappropriate use of resources. When this happens, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Leaders work closely with teachers to check what pupils know and do not know. These checks are at an early stage of development. Consequently, leaders do not have an accurate picture of how effective the curriculum changes have been. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are quickly identified. Individual plans for support are in place but are not always accurate enough. This means that pupils with SEND do not achieve as highly as they should.

In early years, many children start school with additional speech and language challenges. As a response, leaders have reordered parts of the curriculum to introduce certain sounds more quickly. With this additional support, plus extra reading time, children are quickly learning the sounds that letters make. This helps them to confidently apply prior knowledge when reading unfamiliar words. Pupils read books that are matched to their knowledge. This helps them to practise sounds they are learning. Extra, small group sessions are used to support pupils who find reading more difficult. This is helping pupils to improve their reading more quickly.

Leaders have created an environment where pupils feel comfortable and safe. Pupils' behaviour is managed consistently and fairly across the school. All staff have high expectations for how pupils should behave. When children start Nursery, they begin to learn about positive relationships and how to look after themselves. As pupils move through the school, they learn to manage their own behaviours and develop an understanding of other people. As a result, pupils build resilience, responsibility and have respect for others. Pupils behave well.

Leaders are aware of the need to provide experiences for pupils beyond the classroom. COVID-19 has had an impact on usual provision but leaders have maintained extra-curricular activities where possible. Leaders are determined that pupils will have knowledge of their local area. The history curriculum includes specific learning about the local mining industry, for example. Pupils were part of a mining project and worked with a local artist. Pupils have also had opportunities to be part of local community singing events and broaden their cultural awareness by experiencing the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Governors share the drive and determination for success along with the headteacher. They are aware of the changes that have had to be made. They contribute fully to the life of the school. They hold leaders to account with information they receive and from focused school visits. Leaders have created an environment where staff well-being is valued.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders have identified the increasing demand to support vulnerable pupils. They have acted swiftly to expand the pastoral and safeguarding team. This reflects leaders' determination to keep pupils safe. Staff are vigilant and report concerns quickly to the designated safeguarding leaders (DSLs). Once a concern has been

raised, DSLs act decisively and identify what are the most appropriate next steps. Leaders work collaboratively with external agencies and always strive to provide the right help for pupils and families. Leaders ensure that safeguarding is not just a responsive action. They are proactive in providing help and advice to try to prevent more serious problems.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not include defined core knowledge that is vital for pupils to learn. This means that pupils are unable to build a secure foundation of knowledge and apply this when required. Leaders should review the curriculum so precise knowledge content is taught at the right time and in the right order.
- The implementation of the curriculum across the school is inconsistent. This means pupils are not acquiring the knowledge they should in every year group. Leaders need to make sure that staff subject knowledge is consistent across all subjects and year groups.

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	106771
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10200702
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	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Cape
Headteacher	Lindsey Ebsworth
Website	www.st-albans.doncaster.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 April 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The school has provided nursery provision since September 2021. This includes placements for two-year-old children.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher both took up post in January 2021.
- The current headteacher has appointed twelve new permanent members of staff. These include teaching and non-teaching staff.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors looked in depth at the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, science and physical education. In these 'deep dives', inspectors spoke to

leaders about the curriculum and met with teachers from the lessons visited. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils.

- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator, members of the local governing body and spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at the single central record and spoke to leaders, teachers, governors, and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to parents, and they considered the 36 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 20 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the 21 responses to Ofsted's online staff's questionnaire. There was one response to Ofsted's pupils' questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Milligan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lynda Florence

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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