

Inspection of St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

Windrows, New Church Farm, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 8NP

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe at St Edmund's Catholic Primary School. Children in early years settle in quickly and enjoy learning. Pupils said that their school 'is friendly and welcomes everyone'.

Pupils know that staff care about them and want them to do well. Pupils achieve well in some subjects, such as reading and mathematics. They do not learn as well as they should in some other subjects. This is because, in these subjects, the curriculum is not as well thought out.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are included in every aspect of school life. They achieve as well as other pupils in school.

Pupils develop their wider interests through after-school clubs and visiting the theatre, museums and galleries. They learn about helping others by holding fundraising events for charities. They also learn about being responsible, and to understand democracy through holding school council elections and attending a local pupil parliament.

Pupils are expected to behave sensibly. Most try their best to follow the new behaviour rules. On occasions, some pupils do not follow these rules as closely as they should.

Pupils learn how to be a good friend and to be kind to others. If bullying happens, teachers act swiftly to stop it.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders want pupils to have high aspirations for themselves.

In some subjects, leaders are clear about the most important knowledge pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. In these subjects, leaders use their strong subject knowledge to support and guide their colleagues. This helps teachers to feel confident to deliver the curriculum. In addition, assessment strategies are used well to make sure that pupils build their knowledge strongly over time. Pupils achieve well in these subjects as a result.

Several subject leaders are new to their roles. They have had limited opportunities to develop the subject knowledge and expertise that they need to lead their subjects well. In these subjects, the curriculums are less well developed from early years to Year 6. They do not contain the information that teachers need about what to teach and when to teach it. This makes it more difficult for teachers to build up pupils' knowledge securely, or to assess whether pupils have understood and remembered their learning.

Learning to read is a priority. In early years, children learn to love reading. They sing songs, learn nursery rhymes and share books with teachers. These activities help children to develop their language and communication skills. Many older pupils also enjoy reading and could talk about their favourite books and authors.

Children begin to learn phonics as soon as they start Reception Year. The phonics curriculum helps children to build up their knowledge of letters and sounds in a logical order. Pupils in Year 1 build on this knowledge to learn how to read more complex words. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained to teach phonics with confidence. Staff regularly check what children have remembered to make sure that learning is secure.

Pupils practise reading with adults often. Staff make sure that the words in reading books match the sounds that children and pupils have learned. This helps pupils to develop confidence and fluency in reading. If pupils need help to catch up, staff provide extra support quickly.

Pupils in all year groups do not behave consistently well. In some year groups, this leads to disruption in pupils' learning.

Leaders and staff work well together to identify pupils with SEND. Leaders listen to what parents and carers say about their children. They work with specialists, so that the right support is provided quickly. This helps pupils with SEND to learn and to achieve well in subjects such as reading and mathematics. Along with other pupils, their achievement is hindered in those subjects where the curriculums are not well thought out.

Leaders provide opportunities for pupils' wider development. Some of these experiences help pupils to develop characteristics such as perseverance and resilience. For example, some pupils represented their school in a debate. They were proud of this achievement because they had to overcome their fears. Pupils learn about some faiths and cultures. However, pupils struggle to remember important knowledge from the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. This includes their learning about healthy relationships and about some of the protected characteristics. Leaders' work to improve the PSHE education curriculum is at a very early stage.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and of where things need to improve. They work closely with other professionals to achieve this. Governors provide effective support and challenge to leaders.

Staff are enthusiastic about their part in improving the school further. They are proud to work at St Edmund's and appreciate the support that they receive from leaders in respect of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is of the highest importance to leaders and to staff. Leaders ensure that staff receive training to help them to identify when pupils may be at risk from harm. Staff know the procedures to follow if they have any concerns.

Leaders and staff know families well. Leaders work effectively with professionals, such as family well-being services. This helps them to provide appropriate advice and support quickly to those families who need it most.

Leaders are aware of the dangers pupils can face beyond the school. They make sure that lessons help pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They regularly update these when any new issues emerge. For example, pupils learn about staying safe when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' curriculum thinking is at an early stage in some subjects. In these subjects, the curriculum does not contain all of the knowledge that pupils need to learn, or the order in which they need to learn it. This prevents teachers from building up pupils' knowledge thoroughly and securely. Leaders must ensure that the curriculums in all subjects contain enough information about the important knowledge pupils need to learn and when they need to learn it.
- Some subject leaders do not have strong subject knowledge. This prevents them from being able to support their colleagues to deliver some of the subject curriculums effectively. Leaders should ensure that all subject leaders develop the strong subject knowledge and expertise that they need to ensure the successful implementation of the curriculum.
- Sometimes, pupils do not live up to leaders' high expectations for their behaviour around the school and in lessons. Leaders have very recently introduced a new behaviour management policy. They should ensure that this is consistently followed. This will help pupils to conduct themselves appropriately around school and ensure that lessons are not disrupted.

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	119592
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10210878
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	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Emma Heywood
Headteacher	Annette Birmingham
Website	www.stedmundswestlancls.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 July 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school falls under the Diocese of Liverpool. The most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in December 2017.
- Leaders do 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and members of staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of safeguarding documentation, including the single central record. They spoke with staff to check how well they understood their safeguarding responsibilities.

- The lead inspector considered a range of documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, leaders' self-evaluation and plans for improvement.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. They met with subject leaders, discussed curriculums, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and spoke with some pupils about their learning.
- In addition, inspectors met with subject leaders and looked at pupils' work in science, design technology, art and design and PHSE education.
- Inspectors visited the early years provision throughout the inspection. The lead inspector met with the lead teacher for early years.
- The lead inspector observed children in early years, and pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime and playtimes.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese by telephone.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and carers to gather their views about the school. The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors spoke with staff to gather their views about their workload and well-being. The lead inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils during the inspection. The lead inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Julie Morley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Suzanne Blay	Ofsted Inspector

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