

Inspection of St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Monastery Lane, Sutton, St Helens, Merseyside WA9 3SP

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2022

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 Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and children enjoy their time at school. The cheerful greetings that pupils receive each morning from caring staff, and the pupils who act as attendance ambassadors, make them feel at ease and ready to learn from the off.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), get on well together. Pupils who have joined the school recently valued the warm welcome that they received. Pupils make friends easily.

Pupils understand leaders' high expectations and they make every effort to reach them. Pupils, including children in the early years, are well mannered and polite. They enjoy learning and they work hard in their lessons.

Pupils appreciate the clubs that they can attend and are keen to take on a range of responsibilities. They know that they can use their voices to make a positive difference. Pupils told inspectors that they would not stand by if someone else was being treated unkindly.

Pupils are confident that should they report any concerns, including about bullying, staff would act quickly to resolve the situation. This helps them to feel safe.

Through their involvement in regular 'Big Democracy' activities, all pupils have opportunities to make suggestions for improvements to their school. For instance, pupils' ideas about playtimes have recently been incorporated into the school behaviour policy.

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

Leaders have planned a broad and ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with SEND. For each subject, leaders have decided on the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn. They have ordered content carefully so that new learning builds on what pupils have learned previously. This helps pupils, including children in the early years, to progress well through the curriculum.

Most subject leaders are trained well and provide valuable guidance for teachers about how to deliver curriculums effectively. For the most part, teachers have strong subject knowledge and understand how the curriculums support pupils to build on earlier learning. They explain new learning clearly and use a range of strategies to check on pupils' understanding. Staff act quickly to resolve any misconceptions.

That said, in one or two subjects, some specific aspects of the curriculum are not taught consistently well. Consequently, in these subjects, pupils lack the full range of knowledge and skills that they need to deepen their understanding over time.

Leaders in the early years have planned a curriculum that ensures children in the Nursery class make a strong start. Staff have high expectations of what children can achieve and they maintain a sharp focus on developing children's spoken language and vocabulary. Through their warm encouragement and enthusiasm, staff ensure that children try their best and achieve well.

Leaders have placed a high importance on pupils learning to read well through a clearly structured phonics programme. Children learn to match sounds to letters in daily lessons as soon as they begin in the Reception class. Staff receive regular training and guidance to deliver phonics sessions consistently well. Teachers keep a careful check on how well pupils know and remember sounds, and provide extra support for those pupils who fall behind. However, a small number of pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their reading. At times, this delays these pupils in developing their reading fluency and accuracy.

Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified early. Teachers are skilled in a range of approaches to ensure that pupils with SEND access the full curriculum and achieve well. Pupils are ably supported by well-trained teaching assistants when necessary.

Leaders have introduced a clear behaviour system that is understood well by pupils and used consistently by staff. Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained to deal with any challenging behaviour in a sensitive and constructive way. This helps to minimise any disruption to pupils' learning. Some pupils who have struggled to manage their own behaviour in the past have been supported well to overcome their difficulties.

Pupils are encouraged to express their ideas and opinions to play an active part in decision-making in the school. They show a keen interest in learning about different beliefs, families and cultures, and demonstrate a mature approach to discussions. Pupils understand that everyone should be treated with respect, regardless of their differences.

School leaders have worked with determination and resilience to continue to improve the school through a particularly challenging period, including a partial collapse of the school building. Staff appreciate that school leaders are approachable and mindful of their well-being.

Governors are knowledgeable and dedicated to ensuring that pupils benefit from a high-quality education. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Members of the governing body are proud to serve the school community and share leaders' high ambition for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are trained regularly so that they remain alert to the signs that might indicate that a pupil is at risk from harm. Staff know how to report any concerns about a pupil.

Leaders take swift action to access support for vulnerable pupils and their families. The safeguarding team actively seeks further support from outside agencies when it is needed.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They also learn about the features of healthy relationships. For example, pupils understand the importance of consent.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that some pupils at the early stages of learning to read have sufficient opportunities to practise their reading. At times, this delays their reading fluency and accuracy. Leaders should ensure that these pupils practise reading regularly enough to enable them to become proficient and confident as early as possible.
- In a few subjects, specific aspects of curriculums are not implemented sufficiently well by teachers. This hinders pupils' achievement these subjects. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders are supported to strengthen teachers' subject knowledge in these subjects. This will help pupils to develop their understanding of these aspects of subjects more fully and achieve well.

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.

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	104805
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10241182
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	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carmel Foster
Headteacher	Rachel Crolla
Website	www.stannessutton.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 March 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes to the senior leadership team and to the governing body.
- Leaders do not currently make use of alternative provision for any pupils.
- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- The school's last section 48 inspection took place in October 2015.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other leaders. They also spoke with subject leaders and members of staff.

- Inspectors spoke with seven members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, during playtimes and lunchtimes, and around the school. They spoke with different groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school, their learning, their behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They reviewed documentation, checked attendance information and spoke to leaders, governors, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also considered aspects of a number of other subjects on the school's curriculum.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers and considered their views which were shared through Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text comments received from parents. Inspectors also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff. There were no responses to the survey for pupils.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation shared by school leaders, including the school development plan, the minutes taken at governors' meetings, and leaders' self-evaluation documentation.

Inspection team

Janette Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andy Hunt

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His Majesty's Inspector

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