

Inspection of a good school: St Oswald's Catholic Primary School

Council Avenue, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, Lancashire WN4 9AZ

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 November 2022

Outcome

St Oswald's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Oswald's Catholic Primary School is a vibrant school full of pupils who enjoy learning and who are eager to do their best. Pupils who are new to the school receive a warm welcome. This helps them to settle in quickly and make new friends. Pupils are proud of their school and would recommend it to others.

Pupils, and children in early years, are happy and they feel safe in school. Leaders take swift action to address any rare incidents of bullying. Pupils have been taught to settle disagreements themselves, but they also know that staff would help them to resolve any 'fallings out' quickly.

Pupils are kind and respectful towards each other, staff and visitors. They hold the 'Ozzie's Way Award' for conduct, effort and performance in high regard and wear the gold pin award with pride.

Leaders expect pupils to behave well and follow rules, such as knowing when to talk and when to listen. Teachers remind pupils of this, and as a result, classrooms are calm and purposeful spaces where pupils can get on with learning.

Leaders have similarly high expectations of what pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve. To this end, leaders ensure that pupils and children benefit from a suitably ambitious curriculum that is delivered well. This helps pupils and children to deepen their understanding of subjects over time.

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

Leaders have made curriculum development a priority. They have sought external, specialist advice to help them design an ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of pupils and children, including those with SEND.

In most subjects, leaders have decided on the important content that they want pupils to learn, and they have ordered learning logically. For example, in mathematics, leaders ensure that pupils and children can build their knowledge and skills securely over time. Teachers are clear about when facts and methods should be taught and provide opportunities for pupils to recap what they know already. This helps pupils to secure their earlier learning. As a result, pupils enjoy and have a keen appetite for mathematics. They use mathematical vocabulary appropriately to explain their thinking.

Teachers know the curriculum well, and they have secure subject knowledge. For the most part, staff check regularly on what pupils can remember. Where there are gaps in pupils' knowledge, teachers address these swiftly. As a result, on most occasions, pupils' learning builds securely on what they already know, and they achieve well. That said, in a very small number of subjects, leaders have not made the key knowledge that pupils and children should learn clear enough to teachers. From time to time, this hinders staff in checking that some aspects of pupils' earlier learning are secure.

Leaders have placed reading at the heart of the school's curriculum. Children in the Reception class begin to learn phonics as soon as they start school. There is a consistent approach to the delivery of the phonics curriculum. Leaders make sure that children who struggle to learn phonics get extra support from staff to help them catch up with their classmates. Staff are well trained in the school's approach to teaching the phonics curriculum. This helps children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 to achieve well in reading. Pupils learn to enjoy books, and they value the opportunity to be read to by an adult in class each day.

Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils and children with SEND are identified promptly. Staff support this group of pupils to access the same ambitious curriculum as their classmates. Teachers plan and resource any adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum appropriately. Well-trained teaching assistants also offer suitable support for pupils with SEND when needed. Pupils with SEND are fully involved in all aspects of school life.

Leaders' investment in supporting mental health and well-being has made a big difference to pupils. Pupils access a range of experiences that help them develop important strategies to look after their own mental health, such as ways to manage their feelings. They feel confident knowing that support is available, if and when they need it. During lessons, pupils' learning is seldom disrupted by poor behaviour. Children in early years benefit from clear and well-established routines.

Pupils have a keen understanding of diversity and the importance of respecting differences. School councillors, well-being warriors and reading ambassadors are keen to take on and embrace the responsibility of their roles.

The cheerful and enthusiastic school staff feel valued by governors and leaders. Staff appreciate leaders' efforts to consider their well-being and workload when making decisions. Leaders provide staff with regular training to develop further their knowledge and expertise.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Members of the governing body maintain a strong oversight of leaders' safeguarding arrangements. Leaders prioritise pupils' safety. They make sure that staff are well trained and vigilant about the signs that may indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm.

Leaders have clear systems in place for staff to record any concerns about a pupil's welfare. Leaders follow up these concerns effectively. Leaders work closely with external agencies, so that pupils and their families get the help that they need.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn about a range of situations that may put them at risk of harm. For example, pupils know how to stay safe when online. Pupils know that they should speak to a trusted adult if the actions of others make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not made the knowledge that pupils should learn clear enough to teachers. This hinders teachers in checking that some aspects of pupils' earlier learning are secure. Leaders should continue their work to ensure that teachers are clear about the building blocks of pupils' knowledge in these subjects.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2013.

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	106488
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10240713
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	291
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dr Andrew Wilkinson
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Hassan
Website	www.stoswaldswigan.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not currently use any alternative provision to meet the needs of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and assistant headteacher to discuss leadership of the school, including provision for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads, the school business manager and other staff to discuss safeguarding.

- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including curriculum plans, school development plans, and safeguarding and behaviour records.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspector also spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school. The behaviour of pupils was observed across the school site.

Inspection team

Michelle Beard, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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