

Inspection of a good school: St Helen's Church of England Primary School

Birch Road, Hollinfare, Warrington, Cheshire WA3 6JS

Inspection date:

6 December 2022

Outcome

St Helen's Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend St Helen's Church of England Primary School. Pupils feel happy because of the harmonious and cooperative relationships that they have with each other. They enjoy playing, learning and socialising together, especially at lunchtimes. Older pupils enjoy being buddies with the younger children. This helps children in the early years to settle quickly into school life. Pupils feel safe in school.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils are polite and show respect for staff, visitors and each other. They know the importance of the school's rules and behave well in lessons and during social times. Pupils told inspectors that if bullying should ever occur, staff deal with it quickly and thoroughly.

Leaders expect pupils to achieve well. Pupils benefit from a well-thought-out curriculum. They are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

Pupils enjoy being a 'leading light' at the school. In these roles, they value how they can make a difference. For example, some of the Year 6 pupils have created their own enticing library in the school hall. They support pupils across the school in selecting stories that they may like to read. These roles help pupils to become motivated and respectful citizens.

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

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. Leaders have thought carefully about what pupils and children in the early years need to learn, so that they can be successful in the future. Staff know what to teach and in which order, from the Reception class to Year 6. This means that, in most subjects, pupils build on what they already know as they move through the school. Leaders have carefully organised the curriculum to suit mixed-year groups. This helps children and pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve well.

Most subject leaders are ambitious and knowledgeable about their subjects. They work alongside teachers to support them to deliver the curriculum effectively. However, some leaders are new to the role of leading a subject area. These leaders are still developing the expertise that they need to carry out their roles sufficiently well.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They check what pupils are learning and address any errors quickly. This stops pupils from developing misconceptions. That said, in some subjects, some teachers do not use assessment strategies effectively to check that pupils have retained important knowledge over time. This means that some teachers do not identify and address pupils' knowledge gaps swiftly enough. This hinders how well some pupils learn.

Leaders have placed a high priority on the teaching of reading. They have made sure that pupils have access to plenty of high-quality books. Across the school, leaders celebrate books and help pupils to develop a love of reading.

Children begin to learn phonics as soon as they begin in the Reception class. The school's phonics programme is well structured and systematic. Staff are equipped well to plan activities that meet pupils' individual needs. Children and pupils read books that are closely matched to the sounds that they know. Teachers make sure that any children or pupils who fall behind get the support that they need to catch up quickly. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well in reading.

Leaders have set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. This ensures that there is little disruption to pupils' learning.

Leaders and staff identify pupils with SEND, including those children in the early years, accurately and quickly. Staff make careful adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND can learn well alongside their peers.

Leaders have ensured that opportunities for pupils' personal development are woven into all aspects of school life. For example, teachers plan a variety of trips and residentials to enhance pupils' learning. Leaders have recently implemented more opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of after-school activities, for example fencing, craft and choir. Pupils, parents and carers appreciate this.

Trustees and governors provide valuable support and challenge. This has been instrumental in the many improvements made since the school joined the multi-academy trust. Staff are highly positive about working at the school. They value leaders' support for their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, governors and trustees make sure that staff know how to keep pupils safe. Staff know what signs to look for if a pupil may be at risk of potential harm. They know how to report any concerns that they may have. Leaders follow up concerns quickly. They

work effectively with external agencies to make sure that pupils and their families receive the timely support that they need.

Pupils learn about the potential risks they may encounter, including online and in the wider community. Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, some teachers do not use assessment strategies consistently well. This means that, on occasion, teachers do not identify and address pupils' knowledge gaps quickly enough. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment strategies effectively to check that pupils learn the intended curriculum well.
- Some subject leaders are at an early stage of developing the skills to lead a subject area effectively. This hinders them in supporting teachers to deliver some aspects of subject curriculums well. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders are well equipped to lead their subjects with confidence and to provide effective support for teachers' delivery of subject curriculums.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Hollins Green St Helen's CofE (Aided) Primary School, to be good in February 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.

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	146412
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10256101
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	119
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Laurie Kwissa
Executive Headteacher	Mark Ward
Website	www.sthelensprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust in June 2018. When its predecessor school, Hollins Green St Helen's CofE (Aided) Primary School was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was carried out in February 2017.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 met with the executive headteacher, head of school and other leaders.
- The lead inspector met with a trustee, who is also the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, and also representatives from the local governing body.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust and a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and

history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with leaders.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. Inspectors also spoke with staff to understand how they keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. This included the free-text comments. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils. Inspectors also spoke with some pupils about school life.
- Inspectors spoke with staff to discuss leaders' support for their workload and well-being.

Julie Barlow, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Patrick Rayner

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022