

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

Calve Croft Road, Peel Hall, Wythenshawe, Manchester M22 5EU

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 January 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and children arrive at this school happy and ready to learn. They feel safe in school because they know that staff will listen to them and care about their well-being. Pupils appreciate having someone to talk to and they value the way in which leaders check on how they are feeling.

Pupils and children treat each other with respect and they said that everyone is welcome at their school. They understand that sometimes pupils have disagreements and they know how to deal with these when they arise. Leaders deal with any incidents of bullying and falling out quickly and appropriately.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well, both in lessons and at playtime. On the rare occasions that some pupils struggle to regulate their behaviour, staff use the strategies in leaders' behaviour policy effectively. However, some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. This hinders how well these pupils learn the curriculum.

Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). To this end, the new leadership team has prioritised the development of a suitably ambitious and well-designed curriculum that meets pupils' needs. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because, in some subjects, including in reading, the curriculum is in the early stages of development. As a result, there remain weaknesses in how well aspects of these curriculums are delivered.

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

Leaders are developing a curriculum which builds on pupils' learning from the Nursery Year to Year 6. In some subjects, leaders are clear about what pupils will learn and the

order in which they will learn curriculum content. In these subjects, leaders make sure that teachers know what they should teach and when they should teach it. However, in other subjects, there is not enough clarity about the knowledge that pupils must learn and when it should be taught. This makes it harder for teachers to design learning that supports pupils to build their knowledge over time. Added to this, it also makes it difficult for staff to check whether pupils have thoroughly understood and remembered earlier learning.

In some subjects, teachers use assessment strategies well to check that pupils understand what they have been learning before they move on to new ideas. For example, in mathematics, teachers afford pupils the opportunity to recap and consolidate previous learning. This helps teachers to check that pupils' earlier learning is secure and make links with new learning. However, this is not the case in those subjects in which teachers lack clarity about what pupils need to learn.

Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme. For the most part, staff are well trained and equipped to deliver phonics lessons well. Pupils and children are growing in confidence with their reading, and they use their phonics knowledge to help them to sound out new words. Leaders ensure that pupils' and children's books are well matched to the sounds that they have learned. Staff provide additional support for those pupils who are struggling to learn to read. However, this support is not helping some pupils to catch up quickly enough with their classmates. This is because these pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to practise their reading.

In the early years, skilled staff are trained to develop children's vocabulary so that they can talk about what they are learning with enthusiasm. For example, children in the Nursery class explained that penguins live in Antarctica, where it is cold and snowy. While creating model penguins, children were keen to explain that penguins have flippers and not feet so that they can stand on the ice.

Leaders carefully consider the needs of pupils and children when they join the school. Pupils' additional needs are identified early by staff. Leaders ensure that teachers are provided with the information that they need to support these pupils' learning. Pupils and children with SEND are encouraged to take part in all aspects of school life, including school trips and clubs.

During lessons, pupils follow teachers' instructions. When low-level disruption happens, teachers deal with it quickly. Pupils' and children's learning is rarely disrupted.

Pupils have opportunities to develop beyond the classroom. For instance, older pupils were proud to provide information for the public on climate change. Pupils in the 'mini-vinnies' group have reached out to the local community, providing coffee mornings and helping out in the local foodbank. Pupils understand the importance of helping others and they represent their school with pride.

Governors and directors of the trust are mindful of the staff's workload. For example, they have supported the senior leaders to implement changes to reduce unnecessary work for teachers. Staff said that they feel well supported and they feel proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are well trained and understand their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. Staff report any concerns quickly. Leaders act promptly on these concerns to make sure that pupils are being kept safe.

When appropriate, leaders use external agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders know their community well and they understand the challenges that some pupils may face.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. This includes what they should do to keep themselves safe online and when they are out and about in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not made the knowledge that pupils should learn clear enough to teachers. This hinders teachers in designing learning that supports pupils to build on their knowledge over time. Added to this, it also makes it difficult for teachers to check on pupils' understanding and to ascertain what knowledge they have retained. In these subjects, leaders should ensure that staff are clear about what pupils should be learning and when curriculum content should be delivered.
- Leaders do not make sure that those pupils who struggle with reading get enough opportunities to practise their reading and catch up quickly. As a result, pupils do not have the secure phonics knowledge they need to read effectively. Leaders should ensure that pupils have enough opportunities to practise the sounds that they have learned and gain the reading knowledge they need to catch up quickly with their peers.
- Some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. This means that they miss out on valuable learning time, and this impacts negatively on how well they achieve. Leaders should ensure that they develop effective strategies to improve the attendance of these pupils so that they do not miss out on learning.

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 predecessor school, St. Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School, to be good in March 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	140758
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10226153
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	Board of directors
Chair of Board of Directors	Nick Johnson
Headteacher	Elisabeth Simmons
Website	www.st-elizabeths.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new acting headteacher was appointed in September 2022.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in June 2018.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and a wide range of other staff.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, directors of the trust board, the chief executive officer of the trust, and the school support officer from the diocese, and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their work and their wider school life.

- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation relating to safeguarding. She examined leaders' approach to safer recruitment. The inspector also spoke to staff about their safeguarding knowledge and checked how well they understood their safeguarding responsibilities.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during playtimes and while in lessons.
- The inspector spoke with parents to gather views about the school. She considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into early reading, mathematics and design technology. She spoke with the staff who lead these subjects, visited lessons and spoke with teachers. She also spoke with pupils about their learning and viewed examples of their work. The inspector considered how leaders organise other subjects across the curriculum.
- The inspector observed pupils in key stages 1 and 2 read to a trusted adult.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Sarah Barraclough, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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