

Inspection of a good school: Our Lady and St Swithin's Catholic Primary School

Parkstile Lane, Croxteth, Liverpool, Merseyside L11 0BQ

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2023

Outcome

Our Lady and St Swithin's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at this school. Leaders have given much thought to creating a positive and welcoming school environment for pupils. For example, pupils walk through calming multi-sensory corridors where relaxing music is played and incense dispensers give off soothing smells. Pupils have endless things to do at breaktimes and lunchtimes. These activities are well organised and help pupils to build positive relationships with each other. Pupils also have their weekly 'well-being Wednesday' activities to promote positive exercise habits and develop their understanding of mental well-being.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' achievement and behaviour, including most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In many subjects, pupils typically achieve well.

Most pupils behave well in their lessons and around the school. Leaders deal with behaviour or bullying issues effectively and put in place a range of support for pupils who might need extra help to manage their feelings.

Pupils said that they appreciate their positive relationships with their teachers and enjoy the unique rewards that they can achieve, for example the hot chocolate reward and the champions' breakfast. Pupils also value the local sporting competitions in which they participate. Pupils are developing their knowledge of horticulture by planting new fruit trees to create their own orchard in the school grounds.

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

In most subjects, leaders have introduced broad and ambitious subject curriculums. In these subjects, leaders have identified the specific knowledge that pupils should learn and how teachers should deliver the subject content in a sensible order. This meets the needs of most pupils in the school. However, the curriculum that leaders have designed for pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision) is not fit for purpose. This curriculum is not ambitious enough and does not

meet these pupils' academic needs and capabilities sufficiently. Therefore, while the majority of pupils in the school achieve well in many subjects, this is not the case for pupils in the specially resourced provision.

Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They deliver the curriculums as intended. Teachers generally use their expertise well to help them carry out checks on pupils' learning. However, some teachers do not use assessment strategies effectively to modify their teaching or identify when pupils need help to correct the errors that pupils make in their work. This sometimes means that teachers ask pupils to start independent activities before pupils have understood what they need to do. It also sometimes means that pupils repeat their errors and misconceptions because some teachers are not effective at addressing them.

Leaders promote reading through various initiatives, such as book vending machines. They have a sharp focus on helping pupils learn to read as soon as they are able. Children learn phonics straight away when they join in the Reception Year. Teachers quickly find out the sounds that pupils know and make sure that they provide books that are well-matched to pupils' phonics knowledge. Teachers are well trained and deliver the phonics programme consistently well. Leaders arrange highly focused and effective catch-up support for those pupils still learning to read. Leaders also ensure that teachers delivering this extra help have the expertise to do so. This helps pupils to become fluent and confident readers.

Children in the early years get off to a positive start. Teachers support children in the Nursery and Reception Years to develop positive behaviours for learning. Children learn through a well-organised curriculum that prepares them well for their future learning.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND have their needs identified effectively. Most pupils with SEND have their needs appropriately met and leaders arrange external support for these pupils where appropriate. Occasionally, teachers do not sufficiently adapt their delivery of the curriculum for some pupils with SEND. Furthermore, due to the weaknesses in the design of the bespoke curriculum in the specially resourced provision, some pupils with more complex SEND do not have their academic needs appropriately met.

While some adults and pupils stated that disruptions to learning do occur, leaders demonstrated that they deal with behaviour and bullying issues effectively. Leaders have robust systems to keep a close eye on any individual issues in the school and, when necessary, implement a range of supportive actions for pupils who need help to manage their emotions.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development well through the curriculum and a wide range of initiatives. They provide particularly well for pupils' mental well-being. Pupils develop a good understanding of diversity, including different relationships, through their lessons and assemblies. Pupils dutifully undertake leadership roles, such as lunchtime mentor-style responsibilities to support younger pupils in their play. Pupils recognise the importance of their contributions in developing a respectful and supportive school community. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

There is some discontent among different members of the school community. Although leaders, including governors, are taking steps to engage with the views of others, some parents, carers and staff who shared their views do not believe that leaders are receptive to their concerns. Some staff do not feel that leaders take sufficient account of their workload and welfare.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors are knowledgeable about the additional risks within the local community and ensure that all staff are highly alert to these dangers. Staff are well trained to identify and report any concerns that they may have about pupils' safety. Leaders are highly effective at responding to safeguarding concerns and arranging appropriate levels of support for pupils and their families.

The curriculum, and other ongoing school initiatives, helps pupils to understand how to stay safe outside of school and when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not ensure an appropriately ambitious curriculum experience for some pupils with SEND. This means that these pupils do not achieve the best possible outcomes. Leaders should ensure that teachers are well equipped to adapt their lessons for pupils with SEND. Leaders should also ensure that they review the bespoke curriculum in place for pupils in the specially resourced provision so that they have access to an ambitious curriculum offer that appropriately meets their needs.
- Sometimes, teachers do not use assessment strategies well to recognise when they might need to modify their teaching or to identify when pupils need further help during a lesson. This sometimes means that teachers do not deliver subject content effectively and miss opportunities to correct errors in pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that staff have sufficient expertise to use assessment strategies effectively so that they can help pupils to build their knowledge securely over time and provide effective support to correct errors in pupils' work.
- Some parents and staff who shared their views do not feel that leaders take sufficient account of their views. This means that some members of the school community feel disaffected and some staff do not feel their well-being is appropriately considered. Leaders should engage further with parents and staff to remove the barriers that are inhibiting effective working partnerships.

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 school to be good in October 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	104632
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10256138
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	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Ready
Headteacher	Emma Hartley
Website	www.ourladyandstswithins.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 October 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has its own nursery provision for three-year-olds.
- This is a Catholic school. The most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in March 2019.
- Leaders currently make use of one registered alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. The provision has a maximum pupil admission number of 21 pupils. There were 19 pupils on roll at the time of the inspection.

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 that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- The inspector spoke with the governing body, including the chair of governors.

- The inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and archdiocese.
- The inspector checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. He looked at a range of documents and spoke to leaders and staff. The inspector also spoke to pupils about whether they feel safe in 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 lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- The inspector listened to pupils read with a familiar adult.
- The inspector also spoke with leaders and pupils about the curriculum in a small number of other subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times. He spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. He also considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. He also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector spoke with parents and carers as they dropped their children off at school. He considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

David Spruce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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