

Inspection of a good school: St Leo's and Southmead Catholic Primary School Serving the Community

Lickers Lane, Whiston, Prescot, Merseyside L35 3SR

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

St Leo's and Southmead Catholic Primary School Serving the Community continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and children in the early years, live up to the leaders' vision to create happy, resilient and successful learners. Pupils welcome visitors warmly and engage with them confidently. They are eager to show off their school. They are kind to each other. Older pupils act as positive role models for younger children.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have designed and implemented an aspirational curriculum that is delivered well by staff. This enables all pupils to achieve well.

Leaders deal with any incidents of bullying effectively. They have clearly outlined the high standards of behaviour that are expected, and pupils respond well to these high expectations. All pupils follow the established school routines. Leaders have created a calm and orderly environment, where pupils feel happy and safe. Pupils describe their school as 'friendly' and 'inclusive'. Parents speak highly of the school.

Pupils benefit from a range of clubs and educational visits. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to adopt positions of responsibility, such as tidying the construction site in the Nursery and being members of the pupil leadership team.

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

Leaders have constructed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those in the early years. It provides the knowledge and skills pupils need to be successful learners.

The curriculum is designed to build on what pupils have learned before in a logical way. Leaders have ensured that teachers delivering the curriculum are trained to deliver it as intended.

Leaders have identified the key knowledge that they want pupils to remember over time. For the most part, teachers use assessment strategies effectively to check what pupils have remembered and understood. They are adept at identifying misconceptions and filling gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, in some subjects, teachers do not check well enough if pupils have remembered what they have been taught previously. This hinders how well some pupils learn over time.

Children in the early years enjoy listening to stories and singing songs. They are keen to take their learning outdoors. The curriculum in the early years prepares children well for key stage 1.

Leaders have put reading front and centre of the curriculum. Children begin learning phonics in Nursery. Leaders have recently invested in a new phonics programme. Practitioners are trained regularly to ensure that this programme is delivered effectively. Pupils take home books which contain words that match closely to the sounds they are learning in school. Staff help pupils who find reading more difficult to catch up with their peers. However, some weaker readers are not catching up as quickly as they could. This is hindering their access to other areas of the curriculum.

Teachers read a wide variety of high-quality texts regularly to pupils. Children in the early years are excited by the books that are read to them. They join in with the actions and guess what might happen next. 'Reading Heroes' act as role models for younger children. Pupils are encouraged to experience a range of authors and types of books. They discussed maturely whether well-known texts should be altered for the modern-day reader. The reading curriculum is enhanced through opportunities to see Shakespearean plays performed live on stage.

Pupils behave well in school and at playtimes. They display a mature attitude to their learning, and lessons are rarely disrupted. This enables teachers to deliver the curriculum uninterrupted. Leaders are working steadfastly to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. While their efforts are improving the rates of attendance for some pupils, other pupils do not attend as regularly as they should. These pupils miss out on important learning.

Leaders identify quickly and effectively if pupils have additional needs. Teachers are trained appropriately to implement strategies in the classroom that meet the needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils access the full curriculum with their peers and achieve well.

Leaders are passionate about providing a range of experiences for pupils beyond the classroom. This includes residential trips and visits to the zoo and the theatre. Pupils and parents speak enthusiastically about these opportunities. Pupils in Year 6 are looking forward to their trip to London in the summer. There is a variety of clubs that pupils can attend, such as chess, sports and challenge club. Through the personal development

programme, pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy, both physically and emotionally. Visitors to school have informed pupils about some of the career paths that are available to them.

Governors are knowledgeable about leaders' key priorities to further develop the quality of education for pupils in school. Staff appreciate the efforts of leaders and governors to care for their well-being. Leaders have worked closely with staff to reduce their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture in school. Staff are trained regularly to ensure that they can spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders are aware of potential issues that may affect the safety of pupils in the local community. They work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the information and help they need.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. They are made aware of the dangers associated with smoking and alcohol misuse. They are taught not to give out personal information when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This means that some pupils are not accessing the full range of opportunities on offer, and this slows their learning. Leaders should ensure that they continue to support these pupils to increase their rates of attendance.
- Leaders have introduced a new phonics programme. A small number of pupils are unable to blend sounds to make words. These pupils are not reading as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that staff receive the guidance that they need to help these pupils to catch up quickly.
- In some subjects, teachers do not check well enough what pupils have learned and remembered over time. Therefore, opportunities to embed prior learning and address some pupils' misconceptions are missed. This hinders pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that assessment strategies are used effectively by teachers in all subjects to check on pupils' learning so that any gaps or misconceptions can be identified and addressed.

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 January 2018.

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	104475
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10268844
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	223
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Ian Jardine
Headteacher	Angela Tambourini
Website	stleossouthmead.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 and 24 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative education providers.
- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The most recent section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character took place in January 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 that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, representatives of the governing body and the Archdiocese of Liverpool. She held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector held meetings with those responsible for safeguarding. She checked the policies and procedures for safeguarding.

- Deep dives were carried out in early reading, mathematics and history. For each of these deep dives, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders and teachers, visited some lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum and assessment in some other subjects.
- The inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult and spoke to key stage 2 pupils about reading.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their views on school life, including behaviour and bullying. The inspector observed behaviour at lunchtime.
- The inspector considered the responses to the Ofsted survey for staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. She spoke with parents before the start of the school day to gather their views.
- The inspector reviewed a range of evidence, including leaders' improvement plans and self-evaluation documents.

Inspection team

Niamh Howlett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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