

Inspection of St Alban's Catholic Primary School

Bewsey Road, Warrington, Cheshire WA5 0JS

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 May 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at St Alban's. They benefit from the support of skilled and caring staff, who know them well. Children quickly settle in the early years. They learn to listen to their teachers and follow well-established routines.

Pupils celebrate the diversity within their school community. They are eager to help others. Pupils demonstrate the same care and consideration in their work to support local and international charities. They carry out leadership roles and other responsibilities willingly. Pupils learn the benefits of working together as a team.

Pupils behave very well. They strive to follow the school's golden rules. Pupils play happily at breaktimes and chat sociably with each other. They trust adults to sort out any minor squabbles that might occur. Pupils told inspectors that leaders take their concerns seriously. Leaders deal with incidents, including bullying, well. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe at school.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils' achievements, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils value the praise points that they earn for maintaining positive attitudes to learning. They are focused during lessons. This helps pupils to achieve well. Pupils are prepared well for the demands of secondary school.

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

Leaders have developed a rich and ambitious curriculum that supports pupils to learn well. They have thought carefully about the essential knowledge that pupils should learn across the curriculum. Leaders make sure that teachers know the order in which learning needs to occur. Over time, pupils build a rich body of subject knowledge.

Leaders also ensure that teachers know how to deliver the curriculum to meet pupils' differing needs. For example, leaders furnish teachers with the guidance that they need to provide effective support for pupils with SEND and for those pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). This helps these pupils to learn well alongside their peers.

Teachers routinely check that pupils understand what they are learning during lessons. They correct pupils' misconceptions and quickly put in place additional support to remedy gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Teachers are skilled at identifying pupils with SEND. They pass on their concerns to leaders responsible for SEND diligently. Leaders are in the process of further refining the whole-school strategies that they devise and implement to support pupils with SEND.

Leaders have raised the profile of reading across the school. Pupils benefit from reading regularly. They make effective use of the high-quality texts that leaders provide. These books and other literature capture pupils' interests and support their learning well. Pupils enjoy times when they can read books from their own classroom library. They also revel in the well-chosen literature that their teachers read to them. Leaders' focus on developing pupils' understanding of vocabulary is also paying dividends. Most pupils are competent and confident readers by the end of key stage 2.

Leaders ensure that all staff are trained well to support pupils to acquire secure reading knowledge. Many pupils in key stages 1 and 2 build steadily on the phonics knowledge that children in the early years develop. Staff provide additional support for pupils who fall behind in reading or have gaps in their reading knowledge. Most of these pupils catch up quickly. However, a small number of pupils with SEND, and some pupils who are at the early stages of learning to speak English, do not catch up with their reading knowledge as quickly as they could. This sometimes hinders how well these pupils access the wider curriculum.

Pupils behave well during lessons and as they move around the school. They told inspectors that the new behaviour systems that leaders have implemented are fair and work well. Pupils play well together at breaktimes. Lessons run smoothly and without disruption. This means that teachers can focus on pupils' learning.

Pupils' personal development is a high priority. Leaders provide a wealth of well-thought-out opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of responsibility and self-reliance. Pupils learn to recognise their own and others' talents. From the early years upwards, pupils learn to be thoughtful and considerate of others. Pupils develop confidence in making a positive contribution towards their school and wider community. They are well prepared for their next stages of education.

Leaders and governors are committed to ensuring that all pupils receive a high-quality education. Staff are well supported by leaders. They appreciate leaders' consideration of their well-being. Staff value the action that leaders have taken to help them to manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that staff know how to keep pupils safe. Staff diligently pass on their concerns if they feel that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders with overall responsibility for safeguarding act on these concerns swiftly. They make sure that vulnerable pupils receive suitable and timely additional support. Leaders work closely with other agencies to make sure that vulnerable pupils remain safe.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. This includes when they are online. Pupils learn to recognise what constitutes healthy and unhealthy relationships. They know how to access support if they are worried or upset.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that a small number of pupils with SEND, and some of those pupils who are at the early stages of learning to speak English, catch up with their reading knowledge as quickly as they should. This sometimes hinders how well these pupils access the wider curriculum. Leaders should ensure that these pupils benefit from appropriate support so that they can read fluently and accurately.

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	111307
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10256061
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	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Bernadette Gorman
Headteacher	Jane Hardman
Website	www.stalbanswarrington.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Many pupils in the school speak EAL. Some of these pupils have lived in other countries before attending this school.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school belongs to the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in April 2018.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school. An inspector also spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the archdiocese and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation relating to safeguarding. This included the school's central record of staff and visitors, staff training records, records of safeguarding and samples of the records kept on individual pupils.
- An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, and art and design. They spoke with the leaders of these areas of the curriculum. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work from other areas of the curriculum.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school. An inspector scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and carers as they dropped their children off at school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Debbie Withey

Ofsted Inspector

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