

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Leigh

Windermere Road, Leigh, Lancashire WN7 1UX

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils described their school as a welcoming and calm place to be. They are happy at school because they feel valued and included for who they are. The nurturing relationships between staff and pupils help pupils to feel secure and safe.

Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. Pupils are respectful of each other's differences, which creates a harmonious atmosphere within the school.

Pupils like the way in which teachers make their learning interesting. However, leaders have not been clear enough in defining what they want pupils to know in each subject. As such, pupils do not remember some key subject knowledge. This issue is particularly evident in the early years where children experience a poor quality of education.

Pupils enjoy a range of extra-curricular clubs that cater for their talents. Older pupils can also apply for a range of responsibilities. For example, some pupils act as interpreters for other pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils' other jobs include leading activities at playtimes or looking after the school pets.

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

Teachers across the school promote a love of reading. Leaders have made some effective changes to the reading curriculum. The focus on developing pupils' comprehension skills has helped to improve pupils' attainment in reading at the end of key stage 2. Leaders have also established a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics across the early years and key stage 1. The phonics scheme helps teachers to know what to teach and when to teach it. As such, teachers are better equipped to identify where pupils need more help than they were previously. However, despite extra support, some pupils in key stage 1 and in Year 3 are unable to recall and apply key phonics knowledge quickly enough to be able to read with appropriate fluency.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have redesigned the curriculum to set higher aspirations for pupils' achievement. However, in a number of subjects, they have not put enough thought into the key knowledge that they want pupils to learn in order to achieve the ambition of the curriculum. This means that teachers do not have enough guidance on what to teach in each unit of work. As a result, pupils do not remember some essential knowledge in subjects other than English and mathematics. This is most evident in the early years, where there is a lack of a clear framework for children's learning. As a result, activities do not help children to learn all that they should. These children experience disconnected tasks that do not allow them to build the necessary knowledge that they need to be successful learners. They are not prepared for Year 1.

The lack of detail in the design of the curriculum in some subjects also limits teachers' understanding of what pupils, including children in the early years, know and can do. Leaders have effective strategies to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, teachers do not have enough information about pupils' learning to be able to adapt their teaching as well as they could, including for pupils with SEND.

Leaders have ensured that pupils have positive attitudes towards school. As a result, pupils attend regularly and engage in their learning. In the early years, children cooperate well when working together. However, their attention is often not sustained because tasks lack purpose and do not build on their prior learning.

Leaders have ensured that there is a comprehensive offer to promote pupils' personal development. For example, pupils in Year 5 enjoy a trip to France to immerse themselves in French culture. Pupils also have opportunities to learn about what makes a good citizen through a club that undertakes activities in the local community. Leaders have ensured that pupils have a strong understanding of what it means to be equal.

For the most part, governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For example, some governors received phonics training along with staff to better understand how the new scheme is improving the reading curriculum. However, governors and leaders do not assure themselves about the quality of the curriculum in subjects other than in English and mathematics well enough. As such, leaders do not provide teachers with clear enough feedback on how to improve the delivery of the curriculum or enough support in developing teachers' subject knowledge.

Staff appreciate the support that they receive from leaders for their well-being. For example, all staff recently had a meeting on meditation to support their mental health. Parents and carers are also positive about the support that they and their families receive from leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There are clear routines and procedures in place to keep pupils safe. Staff and governors receive regular training and updates in safeguarding matters. This ensures that staff are alert to any signs that pupils might be at risk.

Leaders engage well with a range of other agencies to provide pupils and their families with early help when the need arises, often with positive results.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They trust the adults at the school and know who to approach if they have any worries or concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils in key stage 1 and in Year 3 do not remember some of their phonics knowledge well enough. As such, they do not read as fluently as they should. Leaders should ensure that these pupils are provided with more opportunities to practise applying their knowledge so that pupils read with automaticity and greater confidence.
- In a number of subjects, leaders have not clearly defined the essential knowledge that they would like pupils to learn. As a result, the ambition of the curriculum is not being realised because pupils, including those with SEND, do not recall key learning well enough. Leaders should ensure that, in these subjects, they develop a coherent, well ordered curriculum that enables pupils to know and remember more.
- The curriculum in the early years is poorly designed. As such, it does not provide enough guidance to help teachers secure foundations for children’s future learning. Leaders must urgently put in place a clear framework for children’s learning so that they can build their knowledge cumulatively.
- Leaders and governors have not assured themselves about the quality of the curriculum well enough in subjects other than English and mathematics. As such, staff do not receive the guidance that they need to improve their subject knowledge or teaching practice. Governors and leaders should ensure that they check more closely on the quality of education that pupils receive.

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	106502
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10256043
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	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Patricia Turton
Headteacher	Helen Ahmed
Website	www.leighsacredheart.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- This is a Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character took place in January 2018.

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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, history and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also heard pupils read.

- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum and sampled pupils' work in other subjects.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents who responded to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the views of staff who responded to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with pupils from across the school to ask them about safeguarding. Inspectors reviewed documentation, which included the school's safeguarding policy, register of the checks carried out on new employees and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at breaktimes and when walking round the school. They discussed behaviour and bullying with pupils, senior leaders and other staff.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Schelene Ferris	Ofsted Inspector
Kelly Eyres	Ofsted Inspector

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