

Inspection of St Catharine's C of E Primary School

Scholefield Lane, Scholes, Wigan, Lancashire WN1 3LP

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy learning together. Pupils live up to the school's value of 'love' by thinking of others. For example, they celebrate each other's achievements and they take pride in raising money for global appeals.

Pupils build strong bonds with staff. Pupils trust staff to listen to them and to help them when they need it. For example, when bullying happens, leaders deal with it decisively. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe.

Pupils are polite to one another. They take time to support each other. Pupils know that staff have high expectations of their behaviour and their conduct. Pupils behave exceptionally well. Leaders have created an extremely calm and purposeful learning environment in which all pupils can learn.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers know pupils' individual needs well. Children in the early years, and pupils in key stages 1 and 2, progress very well through the reading, writing and mathematics curriculums. They also achieve well in other subjects.

Pupils take part enthusiastically in a range of clubs. For example, they enjoy trips to the theatre and learning how to sail. These enrichment activities help pupils to discover and develop new talents and interests.

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

Leaders have designed a relevant and ambitious curriculum, including in the early years. They make sure that the curriculum is carefully matched to pupils' needs and that it broadens their experiences. For example, each unit of work starts with a 'brilliant beginning', which includes visits to local museums and trips to the beach. These experiences, which are carefully crafted by leaders and teachers, ignite pupils' interest in their learning.

In most subjects, leaders ensure that the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn is delivered in a logical order. This enables most pupils to build new knowledge securely on what they have learned before. However, in a small number of subjects, leaders are in the process of refining their curriculum thinking. Consequently, teachers occasionally miss out aspects of the essential subject-specific vocabulary that pupils should learn. This hinders some pupils from achieving as highly as they could in these subjects. Nevertheless, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Teachers use leaders' assessment systems well to revisit and check what pupils know and can do. This is especially evident in some subjects, such as mathematics, where pupils can confidently recall key number facts and the times tables. Teachers also take great care to address pupils' misconceptions.

Leaders have placed reading at the heart of the curriculum. Children start to learn about letters and the sounds that they make as soon as they begin in the Reception

Year. Skilled staff deliver the reading programme systematically and effectively. They make sure that pupils read books that carefully match their phonics knowledge. This helps pupils to develop their confidence and fluency in reading. Staff check pupils' reading knowledge diligently. Staff quickly identify pupils who struggle to keep up with the phonics programme. Teachers give pupils prompt help to help them to catch up.

Leaders promote pupils' love of reading. High-quality texts take centre stage in the reading curriculum for older pupils. This helps pupils to hone their comprehension knowledge. Pupils enjoy reading and listening to the stories that their teachers share with them. These include increasingly complex books, selected from a range of topics and areas of interest.

Leaders ensure that staff know how to identify pupils' additional needs accurately and quickly. Staff are well trained to adapt the delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. This means that pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers and they achieve well.

Staff encourage children in the early years to listen attentively and to concentrate well on activities. Children learn to share and cooperate with others. Pupils across the rest of the school are able to regulate their own behaviour because they continuously build on the secure grounding that they receive in the early years. They play happily with their friends. Pupils are polite and respectful. They behave exceptionally well in lessons. This means that everyone can learn free from distractions.

Leaders provide pupils with rich opportunities to learn about diversity. Pupils understand that people may have different families, backgrounds, cultures and beliefs. They know that it is important to treat everyone equally well. However, some aspects of the programme to support pupils' personal development are less well developed. For example, pupils' knowledge of democracy is less secure. Leaders are acutely aware of this relative weakness and they are well on their way to improving this aspect of the school's provision.

Leaders and governors are uncompromising in their ambition for all pupils. Leaders are continually improving the school apace. This vision and drive is embraced by all staff. Leaders carefully consider staff's well-being and workload when making any decisions. Governors are highly skilled. They carry out their roles with diligence and they perform their statutory duties with rigour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that there is a strong culture of care and vigilance at this school. They train staff well in how to safeguard pupils. Staff are alert to the signs that a pupil may have a worry or be at risk of harm. Adults respond to any concerns about a pupil's welfare quickly and appropriately.

Leaders take swift action to support vulnerable pupils and their families, including by working closely with external agencies. Leaders place great importance on open communication with families.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders are refining the essential subject-specific vocabulary that pupils must know and remember. This means that, occasionally, teachers are unclear as to exactly what vocabulary pupils must learn and in what order. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking in these remaining few subjects so that pupils can build their subject-specific vocabulary even more securely over time.

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	106464
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10255987
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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Ryder
Headteacher	Sue Pittendreigh
Website	www.stcatharinesprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Liverpool. Its last section 48 inspection took place in January 2020.
- There is a breakfast club on the school site.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

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 and geography. 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.

- The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects. They spoke to pupils and looked at samples of their work in these subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. The lead inspector spoke to representatives of the local authority and the diocese. She met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the school's policies, procedures and records. They met with the leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors also spoke with staff, governors and pupils about the school's approach to keeping pupils safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. An inspector visited the breakfast club.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke with parents and carers at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online pupil and staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Sue Dymond, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jackie Stillings

His Majesty's Inspector

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