

Inspection of a good school: St Ambrose Catholic Primary School

Rostrevor Road, Adswold, Stockport, Cheshire SK3 8LQ

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 July 2023

Outcome

St Ambrose Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Ambrose Catholic Primary School is a warm, friendly and welcoming place. Pupils enjoy coming to school and value its strong sense of community. They also enjoy speaking to visitors. Pupils are enthusiastic when they talk about their school and the learning that they do.

There are a greater proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school at times other than those expected. Pupils who are new to the school settle quickly and make friends due to the care that they receive from nurturing staff.

Leaders' ambition for all pupils to be happy, independent and confident learners shines through in the range of opportunities pupils get beyond the classroom. These include a successful coding club and a sports club. Pupils also experience exciting visits to places, going on educational trips and on days out in the forest. Pupils flourish in the leadership opportunities on offer, such as being members of the school council and raising money for a range of charities.

Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils' behaviour and achievements, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils rise to these expectations. They work hard during lessons and achieve well.

Pupils behave very well in school. This means that they can get on with their learning, with very few distractions. They understand what constitutes bullying. If poor behaviour or bullying happens, then staff deal with it quickly.

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

Leaders have redesigned the curriculum to ensure that it is ambitious for all pupils. In most subjects, the curriculum identifies what pupils need to know and when subject content will be taught. Subject leaders and teachers have received the training that they

need to develop their own expertise in order to deliver the subject curriculums well. Pupils achieve well in these subjects.

A small number of subjects are not as well organised. This is also true for some areas of learning in the early years. The knowledge and key subject vocabulary that children and pupils should learn are not clearly defined. This means that teachers are unsure about the most important content that pupils need to remember. As a result, some pupils struggle to recall their prior learning or to use what they know when they encounter new learning. In addition, some children in the early years are not as well prepared for Year 1 in some aspects of their learning.

Teachers deliver new learning with enthusiasm. In most subjects, they present information clearly. Teachers use assessment strategies effectively to identify gaps in pupils' learning. Pupils' misconceptions are typically addressed quickly.

Children are introduced to books, traditional tales and rhymes in the Nursery Year. They begin learning phonics right from the start of the Reception Year. Pupils read books that help them to practise the sounds that they are learning. This helps pupils to read with accuracy and understanding. Pupils read regularly and enjoy a wide variety of books from the school library and reading areas in the classroom. This supports them to develop an early love of reading. Some pupils who join the school have limited spoken English or reading experience. Teachers make sure that these pupils get the extra help that they need to catch up quickly. Older pupils get to read a wide range of different books, including poetry. This prepares pupils well for their future learning.

Leaders are quick to identify pupils' additional needs, particularly those with SEND. Staff understand how to adjust their delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND benefit from the same ambitious curriculum and learning opportunities as their peers. This helps pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Leaders promote pupils' wider development very well. This helps pupils to become kind, thoughtful young people who respect and appreciate the diversity of the world in which they live. Leaders make the most of opportunities for pupils to learn about the special attributes which make everyone unique, and about how people should not be judged negatively because of their differences. Pupils behave very well. Leaders have established clear routines that all pupils follow. This means that the school environment is calm and orderly.

Senior leaders know their school and community very well. They consider staff's well-being and workload. Governors provide leaders with an effective balance of challenge and support. Staff are extremely proud and happy to work at the school. They feel a real sense of teamwork.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff and visitors to the school receive training to help them to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff keep accurate records of any concerns raised, and leaders diligently follow these through. When a pupil is at risk of harm, leaders provide swift support in school and through their work with outside agencies.

Pupils learn about staying safe. They learn about the risks of being online and about what to do when they feel worried. They are confident that there is a trusted adult in school who will listen to their worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the early years, leaders have not identified what they want to children to know in some areas of learning. This means that some children are not prepared as well as they could be for the demands of the Year 1 curriculum. Leaders should ensure that teachers understand what should be taught and when this should happen in all areas of learning.
- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not made the important knowledge that pupils need to retain clear enough. As a result, teachers are not sure about the most important content, or the key vocabulary, that they need to teach. In these cases, pupils do not remember all their learning well enough. Leaders should ensure that teachers know what pupils must learn in order to build their knowledge over time.

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 March 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	106115
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10283640
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	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jane Roberts
Headteacher	Helen Hilton
Website	www.st-ambrose.stockport.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- St Ambrose Catholic Primary School is part of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in April 2017.

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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector conducted deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, she met with subject leaders and teachers. She visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders and class teachers.

- The inspector observed pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 reading to a familiar adult. The inspector also spoke with pupils about their learning and evaluated their work in some other subjects.
- The inspector talked with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority. The inspector also met with governors, including the chair of the governing body, as well as a representative from the archdiocese.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. She also spoke to several parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted’s staff survey.
- The inspector reviewed leaders’ policies and procedures to keep pupils safe. She discussed safeguarding arrangements with leaders and staff. She also checked the single central record.
- The inspector observed pupils’ behaviour during lessons and at playtimes. She spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders’ expectations of pupils’ behaviour.
- There were no responses to Ofsted’s pupil survey.

Inspection team

Kelly Butler, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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