

Inspection of St Oswald's Catholic Primary School

Padgate Lane, Padgate, Warrington, Cheshire WA1 3LB

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 12 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are nurtured at St Oswald's Catholic Primary School. They benefit from the support of the caring staff who know them well. If they feel anxious or worried, they trust adults in the school to help them. As a result, they feel happy.

Pupils said that everyone is welcome in their school family. The school is a calm environment. Pupils learn to 'love, learn, respect and appreciate'. They are kind and care for each other.

Most pupils behave well in and around the school. They need few reminders to maintain the high standards of behaviour that staff expect. They look forward to finding out who the stars of the week are in celebration assemblies. They take great pride in collecting 'smilies' for their efforts.

The school has high expectations of pupils' achievements. Across a range of subjects, many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils enjoy taking part in the clubs and activities that are available to them, for example, art, running and choir. Many pupils spoke enthusiastically about the performances they have taken part in, including at theatres and in front of large audiences. This helps them to become confident young citizens. They are proud to make a positive difference to their local community by collecting donations for a local food bank and sharing produce from their school garden.

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

The school has constructed a broad and ambitious curriculum from the early years to the end of Year 6. The curriculum is designed to provide pupils, including pupils with SEND, with the knowledge, vocabulary and skills that they need for the next stage in their education.

In most subjects, the school has clearly identified the most important concepts and knowledge that pupils should know and remember and when teachers should teach them. This helps staff to know which aspects of the curriculum to emphasise and revisit. Staff have the expertise they need to introduce new learning to pupils with clarity. They check on what pupils remember from earlier content. When needed, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to revisit previous learning, which helps them build on earlier learning and deepen their understanding in these subjects.

In a small number of subjects, the school does not make the most important knowledge and skills pupils should acquire and remember clear enough. This means that teachers do not revisit or consolidate some key concepts before they introduce new learning. As a result, staff cannot check sufficiently well whether pupils have

remembered earlier learning. In these subjects, some pupils do not deepen their knowledge over time as well as they do in other areas of the curriculum.

The school promotes a love of reading. Pupils benefit from a broad range of diverse texts that enhance their learning. The school places the highest priority on children in the Reception Year and pupils in key stage 1 developing a secure knowledge of phonics and learning to read with confidence. New arrivals at the school, including pupils who speak English as an additional language, quickly begin to learn phonics. Staff identify pupils who struggle to read and take every opportunity to ensure that they catch up with their classmates. However, the school has not ensured that extra help for some younger pupils who struggle to read, including some pupils with SEND, is well matched to the gaps in their phonics knowledge. Some of the books that these pupils read contain sounds that they do not know securely. This affects how well these pupils understand what they read. It also hinders their fluency.

The school makes sure that teachers identify pupils' additional needs correctly and quickly. This includes pupils with SEND. Staff work with external agencies to secure the additional support that pupils with SEND may need.

Pupils behave well. Children in the early years quickly learn the school routines and learn to cooperate well. Most pupils are attentive in lessons and keen to learn. Pupils usually learn without interruption.

The school has carefully selected opportunities to enhance pupils' wider development. Pupils develop an understanding of how the brain works and mental health. They understand that they should treat everyone with respect, regardless of their differences. The school provides pupils with regular opportunities to celebrate diversity, both within and beyond their locality. Pupils spoke excitedly about their celebrations of other cultures and faiths within school.

Governors know the school well. They achieve an appropriate balance of challenge and support. Staff appreciate the school's efforts to consider their well-being and workload when making decisions. For example, subject leaders work in teams, rather than individually, on many aspects of school development.

The vast majority of parents and carers hold the school in high regard. They value the school's communication via weekly blogs and newsletters. The school provides regular workshops for parents on ways to support their children's learning at home, for example with phonics and reading.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some younger pupils who struggle to read, including some pupils with SEND, do not receive effective support to address gaps in their learning. At times, staff do not properly match the books that younger pupils read to their phonics knowledge. As a result, some do not catch up quickly enough with their peers. The school should make sure that pupils who struggle the most with reading receive appropriate support, including the provision of well-matched books, so that they quickly develop fluency and confidence.
- In a small number of subjects, the school has not made clear enough the most important knowledge that pupils need to acquire and remember. This makes it difficult for staff to check gaps in pupils' learning and revisit key concepts before introducing new content. As a result, some pupils struggle to deepen their knowledge over time. The school should refine curriculum guidance for teachers so that pupils learn the content of the curriculum in sufficient depth.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	111369
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10289998
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	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dave Heywood
Headteacher	Helen Lennon
Website	www.stoswaldscatholicprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 and 12 October 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection took place in January 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in the academic year 2023 to 2024.
- The governing body is responsible for the school's morning wraparound care provision.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors conducted deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke with subject leaders, spoke to pupils about their learning and evaluated their work in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority, the school improvement partner and a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors talked with staff and leaders about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with the leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour, early years, SEND and pupils' personal development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their wider experience of school. They looked at a range of policies and documents related to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also spoke to parents by telephone.

Inspection team

Rebecca Jewitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Thompson

Ofsted Inspector

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