

Inspection of St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School

Sidney Powell Avenue, Westvale, Kirkby, Liverpool, Merseyside L32 0TP

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 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	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 10 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at school. Older pupils are positive about the difference that they make to the school community through their responsibilities. For example, some pupils are trained as peer mentors and resolve any small playground incidents before staff need to get involved. Pupils behave well. They are warm hearted and respect each other's differences. Pupils are supportive of one another and understand what it means to be a good friend.

Pupils enjoy learning. They have positive attitudes towards school. The school has high expectations for most pupils in key stages 1 and 2. However, the arrangements to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not help these pupils to achieve as well as they should. In addition, the school has not ensured that the provision in early years consistently meets children's learning needs. A poorly designed curriculum and low expectations for children's learning mean that children are not sufficiently prepared for the next stages in their education.

Pupils enjoy a range of visiting speakers who add to the curriculum. For example, visitors help pupils to create films and to learn about Shakespearean plays. Pupils build an awareness of their own health and safety. They have opportunities to develop their future aspirations and understanding of different careers.

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

In most subjects, the school has designed a curriculum that successfully defines the most important knowledge that pupils should learn and when this should happen. The school provides staff with effective support to deliver the curriculum well for most pupils. Staff know how to address pupils' misconceptions to reinforce their learning. Although the school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND well, it has not put in place appropriate adaptations to ensure that these pupils can access the curriculum. This means that some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should.

Some subjects are at different stages of development. The school does not have effective arrangements to check on the quality of some subject curriculums. In these subjects, teachers do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge well enough. The school does not provide staff with the information that they need to improve some aspects of pupils' learning as quickly as they should.

Staff in the early years care for children well. This includes helping children to manage their own feelings and behaviour. Children respond well to staff as a result of these positive relationships. However, the school has not ensured that staff implement an effective early years curriculum that meets all children's learning needs. The activities that staff provide do not follow children's interests or build on what children already know and can do. This means that children's play lacks

purpose. Children lose engagement in their learning and often flit from one activity to another.

In reading, the school has ensured that staff deliver the phonics curriculum consistently well. Staff pronounce sounds correctly. This helps children in the early years to blend sounds together to make simple words. In key stage 1, pupils are given books which carefully match their current phonics knowledge. Pupils practise their reading often. This helps most pupils to achieve well in reading. However, as in other subjects, the expectations for some pupils with SEND are not as high as they should be. These pupils do not have the opportunities that they need to catch up with their reading quickly enough.

Pupils behave well in lessons and are keen to learn. Staff act quickly to make sure that any potential disruptions do not make a difference to pupils' learning. Pupils focus on their work well. They are polite and pleasant with visitors and with one another.

The school ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a strong understanding of other faiths. Staff provide opportunities for pupils to discuss moral dilemmas, such as how to deal with peer pressure. Pupils also have opportunities to debate relevant current affairs, such as the effects of social media. The school develops pupils' understanding of equality well. Pupils exhibit this in their daily interactions with each other.

Governors have not ensured that the education provided by the school has a positive impact on all its pupils. They have not done enough to stabilise the school during a time of turbulence in staffing. Governors and the school have not provided the support needed for the workload of staff who have taken on additional responsibilities. This has led to weaknesses in the quality of education, particularly for pupils with SEND and children in the early years.

The school develops effective relationships with parents and carers by providing them with information about how to help their children's learning at home. Parents commented positively on the kind and caring nature of staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils with SEND are not provided with the support that they need to learn the intended curriculum, including phonics. As such, they do not read as well as they should. The school should ensure that these pupils are provided with more

focused support to practise applying their knowledge so that they quickly catch up with their learning.

- In the early years, the curriculum that the school has put in place is poorly designed and implemented. As such, the activities that children undertake do not help them to learn. Children are not well prepared for the next stages in their education. Leaders must urgently ensure that staff successfully implement an effective early years curriculum so that children know and remember more.
- The school has not put in place strong enough measures to quality assure the curriculum in some subjects. As a result, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not addressed as quickly as they should be. The school should implement stronger measures to help staff to best support pupils' learning.
- Governors have not challenged or supported the school well enough during the recent turbulence in staffing. As such, there is variability in the quality of education, particularly for pupils with SEND and for children in the early years. Governors should ensure that they have a more accurate picture about what needs improving to support the school to bring about positive change.

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	104464
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10286675
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	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Rowlands
Headteacher	Louise Bowman
Website	www.smaaaprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	30 and 31 October 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, nine new governors have started in their roles.
- A significant number of teachers have left since the previous inspection. New staff have been recruited to these roles.
- The school makes use of one alternative provider for some pupils.
- This is a Roman Catholic primary school. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in March 2019. In line with the revised schedule for these inspections, governors have appropriate arrangements with the archdiocese to make sure that the next inspection will take place by 2027.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- 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, art and design and history. For each deep dive, the 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 individually and as part of classroom activities.
- The inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects and spoke with pupils about their work in these subjects.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to the Ofsted surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at breaktimes and around the school. They discussed behaviour and bullying with pupils, leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and leaders about the provision in place for 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.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

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