

Inspection of St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Lynton Avenue, Weeping Cross, Stafford, Staffordshire ST17 0EA

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Anne's Catholic Primary School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. 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 of the predecessor school.

The headteacher of this school is Karen Bennett, who is also an executive headteacher within the trust. This school is part of The Painsley Catholic Academy, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Stephen Bell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ken Wilson.

What is it like to attend this school?

'Let trust, respect and love live here.' This motto permeates every aspect of St Anne's. Pupils' well-being and care are at the forefront of everything that happens here. The school has high ambitions for every pupil, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All adults want children to be the best they can be. Consequently, pupils flourish and do well.

Pupils at this school are a delight. They are courteous, welcoming and friendly. They enjoy learning and coming to school. The warm and respectful relationships between adults and pupils are a joy to observe. Pupils trust their adults to deal with any issues quickly and effectively should they ever happen. Pupils say that everyone is welcome at their school and that they can 'just be who they are'.

The school places great emphasis on pupils' personal and character development. Pupils benefit from an extensive range of activities that develop their personalities and further their interests. The many activities include taking on leadership roles, trips, residential and a wide range of after-school clubs. Pupils speak with passion about their roles as special friends to younger peers and as house captains. The school is inclusive and ensures that pupils with SEND have the same opportunities as their peers.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum that ensures pupils learn a wide range of subjects every week. This includes art, music, computing, and design and technology. Leaders have given careful attention to what knowledge and skills pupils should learn in each subject over time. Pupils achieve well and make strong progress.

Pupils with SEND are well supported. Pupils who may need extra help are quickly identified and supported. They receive bespoke intervention when needed and generally do well. Staff use assessment well to find out what pupils can do and what gaps they may have in their learning. At times, staff do not always address gaps in knowledge as effectively as they could. When this happens, pupils', especially pupils with SEND, are moved on to new learning before they are ready. This slows their learning.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Pupils read often. The new library is well stocked and includes a wide range of interesting and exciting texts. The reading curriculum is sequenced effectively to focus on developing pupils' reading skills. Effective teaching of phonics ensures that pupils learn how to read at an age-appropriate level. Staff quickly spot pupils who may need extra help. Interventions are swift and ensure that pupils catch up quickly. Over time, pupils become fluent readers.

Nursery and Reception children settle well into school life. Adults forge strong and nurturing relationships with children. Children are safe and happy. They enjoy

learning and playing in classrooms and in the outside spaces. Children learn about the links between letters and sounds as soon as they start school. Adults help children to have the skills they need to begin early reading. In addition, the environment promotes children's interest in number and early mathematics. Senior leaders are aware of some of the remaining areas that need addressing in the early years, such as the explicit teaching of learning behaviours. They, along with trust leaders, are already addressing these.

Pupils' behaviour is good. Lessons are calm and orderly learning environments. Leaders have set high behaviour expectations and made those clear to staff, pupils and parents. However, pupils are not yet taught effectively how to regularly meet these very high expectations and can sometimes fall short. When this happens, not all staff consistently reinforce leaders' expectations.

The school utilises its Catholic ethos and values highly effectively to support pupils' personal development. This work is further underpinned by excellent relationships and the school's personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils have many varied opportunities to grow as people. For example, they are leaders in school, provide support in the library or take part in the many activities to extend their learning beyond the classroom. Pupils understand about different faiths and cultures and say that everyone is equal regardless of their faith. They are exceptionally well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Senior leaders and the trust are unwavering in their drive for excellence. They correctly identify any issues that fall short of their high expectations and address them. The trust always ensures that all staff receive regular and highly effective training to enhance their professional development. The coaching model used is exceptional in upskilling staff. As a result, all staff, including support staff, have strong subject knowledge across the curriculum. Staff and parents are unanimous in their praise for leaders and the trust. All staff are proud to work at the school. They know that leaders care about their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The gaps in learning that some pupils have, especially pupils with SEND, are not always addressed effectively. This means that sometimes pupils are moved on to new learning before they are ready, and this slows their learning. The school should ensure that pupils' learning is secure before moving on to new content.
- Staff do not routinely teach pupils how to meet the high expectations they expect of them. In addition, some staff do not consistently reinforce the school's expectations. Consequently, pupils can sometimes show less positive learning

behaviours that fall short of leaders' high expectations. The school should ensure that all pupils know how to meet the expected behaviours and that staff consistently reinforce them when needed.

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	142208
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10256871
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ken Wilson
CEO of the trust	Stephen Bell
Headteacher	Karen Bennett
Website	www.st-annes-weepingcross.staffs.sch.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is a one-form-entry primary school. It joined The Painsley Catholic Academy trust in 2018.
- The school's headteacher is an executive headteacher who also oversees another primary school within the trust for part of the week.
- The school's daily breakfast and after-school clubs are run by a private company.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.

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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the acting assistant principal and other leaders. The lead inspector held a meeting with the governing body, including the chair, and a meeting with trust representatives. This included the CEO and the chair of the board of directors. A representative from the Diocese of Birmingham joined the meeting via telephone. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and music. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors visited the early years for each of the deep dives.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and interactions during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes and spoke to many pupils during the inspection.
- 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 considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. The inspector also reviewed responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the school gates to gather their views about the school.

Inspection team

Bianka Zemke, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rachel Davis

Ofsted Inspector

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