

Inspection of Cronton Church of England Primary Academy

Smithy Lane, Cronton, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 5DF

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 March 2024

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

The headteacher of the school is Sylvia Thomson. The school is part of the Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Laurie Kwissa, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Margaret Swinson.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Cronton Church of England Primary Academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Cronton Church of England Primary School to be outstanding before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at this school. They are happy, enthusiastic and highly eager to learn. The school's motto, 'Believe, Enjoy, Succeed, Together', permeates through all aspects of school life. Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally strong.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make excellent progress through the school's highly engaging and ambitious curriculum. They approach their work with high levels of interest and curiosity. Pupils relish the learning challenges that teachers provide during lessons and show strong commitment and perseverance when undertaking tasks. Pupils are exceptionally proud of their achievements.

The school has developed an extensive range of experiences that extend well beyond the academic curriculum. Such experiences help pupils to develop their confidence to an extremely high level. These range from attending the martial arts club to singing in the school choir. Pupils also enjoy participating in an array of sporting activities, including cross-country events and multi-sports clubs. Visits and residential trips are also enjoyed by pupils, who greatly value these opportunities. For example, older pupils spoke excitedly about their forthcoming residential trip. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

The school has an exceptionally well-thought-out and carefully constructed curriculum. It precisely identifies the most important knowledge and when it should be taught. With the support of the trust, the school has ensured that staff receive high-quality training that allows them to develop their expertise in a wide range of curriculum areas.

Teachers deliver lessons that inspire and motivate pupils. Activities are purposefully designed to meet the needs of learners extremely well. Assessment information is used effectively to ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of what has been taught. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, develop a rich bank of knowledge that allows them to make connections between different subjects. They achieve extremely well.

The school has highly effective processes in place to rapidly and accurately identify any additional needs that pupils may have. Through carefully considered adaptations, the school makes sure that pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils with SEND achieve very well.

Reading sits at the heart of the school's curriculum. Books are purposely chosen to bring learning to life and to improve pupils' language. From the minute children enter the early years, they are exposed to a wide range of books and authors. This supports children to quickly begin to develop a love of reading and books. Older

pupils enthusiastically told inspectors that reading helps them to widen their vocabulary and allows them to 'enter a different world'. Books in classroom book corners and library areas reflect people from different cultures and backgrounds extremely well, and they encourage pupils to read widely and often.

Phonics is delivered effectively by all staff because of the high-quality training both the school and the trust provide. Lessons are delivered confidently and consistently. The books that pupils read match the sounds that they know. Highly effective support is quickly put in place for pupils who may need it. This helps pupils to read with fluency and strong understanding.

Children in the early years benefit from a highly nurturing environment and quickly settle into routines. Adults effectively model the behaviours that they expect. As a result, pupils' behaviour throughout school is exemplary. Pupils are polite, courteous and extremely well behaved.

Securing high attendance is a high priority for the school. As a result of the robust systems to track attendance, the school easily identifies pupils who may need further support. The school works with families extremely successfully to break down any barriers to rapidly improve attendance rates for these pupils.

Provision for pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils have a deep understanding of the values of tolerance, kindness and respect. The school's international programme helps pupils understand the similarities and differences in the lives led by children in different locations around the world. Pupils understand that the world is a diverse place and that people should be valued for who they are.

There is an array of leadership opportunities available to pupils. The 'gardeners and seedlings' programme allows older pupils to act as 'buddies' to the Reception children. They talk to them about their learning and the books that they are reading, and they help to answer any questions or worries that they have. School and eco-councillors play a highly important part in aspects of decision-making in school. For example, they have introduced paper recycling in each class. Pupils are proud of the roles that they have. They understand that they are developing a sense of responsibility that will support them in their future lives.

Trust leaders and governors have a clear, shared vision. They understand their roles and responsibilities extremely well. Together, they hold the school to account for the quality of education that pupils receive and the outcomes that they achieve. The school and trust are mindful of the impact on workload of any changes that they introduce, for example the new feedback and marking policy. This helps school staff to feel valued. Staff are very proud to work in this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	143456
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10314048
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Margaret Swinson
CEO of trust	Laurie Kwissa
Headteacher	Sylvia Thomson
Website	www.crontonce.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Cronton Church of England Primary Academy converted to become an academy in October 2017. When its predecessor school, Cronton Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Liverpool. Its last section 48 inspection took place in 2018. The next section 48 inspection is scheduled to take place by the end of 2026.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school provides before- and after-school 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 that 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 held meetings with the headteacher and other members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with the CEO as a representative of the board of trustees and of the local governing board, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with representatives of the diocese.
- 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 and spoke to teachers and with some pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils reading with a familiar adult. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum with leaders in some other subjects.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour at various times in the school day. This included during lessons as well as at playtime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents and carers in their responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors spoke with parents as they brought their children to school at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Pat Speed, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Haroon Asghar

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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