

Inspection of St Luke's Catholic Primary School

The Willows, Frodsham, Cheshire WA6 7QP

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 June 2024

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 15 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?

St Luke's is a small school where staff know each pupil as an individual. Pupils like coming to school and they enjoy warm relationships with their teachers. Pupils are kind to one another and said that everyone is welcome there.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils progress well through the curriculum and leave Year 6 ready for the next stage in their education.

Pupils, including children in the early years, behave well. They are polite and courteous to staff and visitors. They listen to one another's ideas and care for their friends. In all that they do, pupils take pride in following the school rules.

Pupils enthusiastically choose from the range of clubs and activities that the school offers. These include sports club, dance and chess. Older pupils enjoy the responsibility of a range of leadership roles. For example, Year 6 buddies accompany children from the Reception class to the local library. Pupils vote for junior leaders, who help to organise fundraising events. Pupils love the chances to go on trips. They especially like residential visits where they learn to become independent.

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

Reading has a high priority in the curriculum. This starts from the moment that children enter the Reception class. They are encouraged to join in with stories and enjoy talking about how these tales relate to their real-life experiences. Children learn the sounds that they need to begin to read. This is built on well when they enter Year 1. Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 read books that are matched to the sounds that they already know. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading. By the time pupils finish key stage 2, they are able to read with both fluency and accuracy.

Subject curriculums have been carefully thought out. The school has considered what pupils should learn from the early years to Year 6. It has identified the knowledge and skills that pupils are taught and the order in which they are learned. Teachers check how well pupils are learning. They use these checks to address pupils' errors and misconceptions. Typically, pupils achieve well. However, in some subjects, some teachers do not use assessment information to consider the next steps in pupils' learning. This means that the activities that some pupils are asked to complete do not match their needs as well as they might. This hampers some pupils from learning as well as they should.

Pupils work hard in class. They listen to their teachers and enjoy learning new knowledge. Routines begin in the early years, where children in the Reception class behave well. Children understand the expectations of the classroom and outdoor area and they play together happily. In key stages 1 and 2, the atmosphere in classrooms and on corridors is calm and purposeful. At playtimes, pupils enjoy joining in with games and climbing in the play area with their friends.

Teachers use their knowledge of each pupil to swiftly identify those who need additional support. The school gives teachers the information and training that they need in order to adapt learning activities. This enables pupils with SEND to learn well alongside their peers.

Pupils learn about the world beyond their own community. For example, they enjoy tasting an exciting range of foods and learning new words from European languages. Pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe, including online. They have an awareness of different types of families. Pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain. For instance, they show understanding and acceptance of difference.

The school prioritises pupils' attendance. It takes swift and effective action to provide support for those pupils who need it. As a result, pupils' rates of attendance are good.

Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They want the very best for pupils of the school and they take positive action to support the workload and well-being of staff. However, their actions to ensure that some of their statutory responsibilities are discharged fully are not as effective as they should be. For example, governors do not ask enough questions about the school environment to make sure that areas of potential risk are suitably assessed. Staff feel valued and appreciate the way in which leaders engage with them when changes are introduced.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, some teachers do not use assessment information as well as they could to inform future learning activities. This means that some pupils' progress is hampered because they are not helped to build successfully on prior learning. The school should ensure that teachers utilise checks on pupils' learning to carefully design their next steps. This will help to secure pupils' prior learning before they move on to new concepts.
- Some of systems to ensure that the governors maintain oversight of the school's work are not as effective as they should be. This sometimes hampers governors from gaining a full insight into pupils' education and welfare. The governing body should ensure that it strengthens its procedures to maintain an accurate understanding of pupils' experiences at school.

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	111379
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10256004
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	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Pauline Stitt
Headteacher	Eileen Murtagh
Website	www.stlukesfrodsham.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 July 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. Its last section 48 inspection, for schools with a religious character, took place in March 2022. The next inspection is scheduled to take place in the 2025/26 academic year.
- A new headteacher, deputy headteacher and chair of the governing body have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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.

- 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a sample of pupils' work, spoke with teachers and talked with pupils about their learning.
- The lead inspector also considered the curriculum in some other subjects. She looked at a sample of pupils' books and spoke with pupils.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. An inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- An inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour as they arrived at school and during lessons and breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their views of school life.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers. They looked at the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's staff and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Frith Murphy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Niamh Howlett

Ofsted Inspector

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