

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School

Rossall Grove, Little Sutton, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH66 1NN

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 November 2024

Outcome

St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils embody the school's vision and describe St Mary of the Angels as a happy school where they love learning. They enjoy their work and the opportunities for learning outside the classroom, including in local woodlands. Pupils benefit greatly from an extensive range of initiatives to support their emotional and mental health. They value the relationships that they form with staff and each other.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They take great pride and care with their work. Pupils are supportive of each other in lessons and during break times. They benefit from routines, which contribute to a calm and purposeful learning environment.

The school sets high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), meet these expectations well in most subjects.

Pupils enjoy the clubs that they attend and the opportunities to represent the school in competitive sports. They enjoy holding responsibilities, such as play leaders and school councillors. Pupils feel rightly that they are making a difference to the school. They understand concepts such as diversity and inclusion and help to make sure that everyone is welcome in their school. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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

The school has an ambitious curriculum. The teaching of fundamental knowledge and skills in English and mathematics is prioritised. Starting in the Reception Class, children

quickly acquire strong phonics knowledge. Where pupils need help to catch up with phonics, effective additional support is provided. This helps pupils to develop into confident and fluent readers.

Pupils develop a love of reading. The school ensures that they are exposed to a wide range of high-quality texts. Pupils enjoy the books read to them by their teachers. They enthusiastically recommend books for others to read. The school's work to promote oracy and vocabulary enables pupils to talk confidently about their learning.

Pupils enjoy the subjects they learn. They value the opportunities and activities that enhance their experiences, including residential visits. In most subjects, pupils achieve well. However, in a few subjects, the organisation of the curriculum does not enable important knowledge to be revisited often enough. Where this is the case, pupils find it hard to recall some of the knowledge needed as the basis for new learning. This slows the progress that they make in their learning.

Staff are well trained. The school supports them well to develop their expertise and to explore research about developments in the subjects that they lead. Staff support each other to confidently deliver the subjects they teach. They use assessment information well to identify strengths in the curriculum and areas where adaptations are needed to help pupils to build their knowledge successfully. Teachers use questions skilfully to check what pupils know and to identify any misconceptions.

Arrangements for identifying any additional needs, including for those with SEND, are effective. The school works closely with parents and carers and outside agencies to get pupils the help that they need to learn well alongside their peers.

Staff work well with pupils from the school council to set high expectations for behaviour across the school. Pupils understand what is expected of them. They conduct themselves exceptionally well around the school. Pupils work hard and are supportive of each other.

The school ensures that attendance and punctuality is a high priority. There is a relentless approach to secure improvements in this area of the school's work. The school works successfully with parents to help them overcome barriers. This contributes positively to the high rates of attendance at the school.

The school's work to promote pupil's personal development is extensive. Pupils learn about and enjoy exploring the differences and commonalities between different faiths and cultures. They make valuable contributions to the school's work to support others, for example, by making parcels for the homeless.

The school provides purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about the wide range of careers and options that are available to them in their future lives. This includes experiences such as vocational learning at a local further education college and a visit to a local university.

Staff feel valued and motivated. They appreciate the support that they receive to manage their workload and well-being. Staff are committed to achieving the school's aims and promoting high aspirations for pupils at every opportunity.

Governors are fully involved in the life of the school and provide appropriate support and challenge. They have a deep knowledge of the school and the community it serves.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the structure of the curriculum means that sometimes key knowledge is not revisited frequently enough. Where this is the case, pupils find it difficult to remember some of the knowledge that is needed as a basis for new learning. The school should ensure that important knowledge is revisited more frequently in these subjects so that pupils can build new learning on what they already know.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in September 2019.

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	111357
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10348069
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Francis Kwateng
Headteacher	Helen Thorpe
Website	www.stmaryoftheangels.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Mary of the Angels is a voluntary-aided Catholic school.
- A section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in May 2023. The next section 48 inspection will be completed within 8 years of the previous inspection.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school has a breakfast- and after-school club, which is run by an external provider.

Information about this inspection

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

- The inspector spoke to the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the teachers and the support staff. This included discussions about the school's development priorities and the organisation of the curriculum.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also met with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Shrewsbury.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also observed pupils, from key stages 1 and 2, reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector discussed the school's approach to behaviour and attendance. He spoke with pupils about behaviour and observed pupils at lunchtime and when moving around the school.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including safeguarding records, behaviour records, attendance records, records of meetings from the governing body, school policies and reports from the local authority and other external services.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- The inspector considered the views of staff through meetings, informal discussions and through responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Keith Pullen, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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