

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School

Brunswick Street, Parr, St Helens, Merseyside WA9 2JE

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 December 2024

Outcome

Holy Spirit 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 feel loved at this welcoming school. The school's motto, 'Together we will soar to new heights', underpins the high ambition that staff have for pupils and that pupils assume for themselves. Pupils are happy because they feel valued and cared for here. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are celebrated for their individuality and are well supported to succeed.

The school has high expectations of pupils. Pupils focus wholeheartedly on their learning and are proud of the high-quality work that they produce. Pupils appreciate their rich learning environment and their behaviour is exemplary. They enjoy the recognition that they receive for behaving well and working hard. Pupils are confident that if they have any worries, there is always an adult in the school who will listen and help.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to take on positions of responsibility. These include being subject ambassadors, members of the school council and playground buddies. These opportunities increase pupils' confidence and oracy. Pupils were excited to share about their recent trips, including one to Denmark and one to a music hall in the city. They benefit from the many visitors to school too, such as those leading drama and history workshops. These activities enhance pupils' learning and help to broaden their horizons.

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

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum which starts from the moment that children join the early years. The key knowledge and vocabulary that pupils will learn is clearly set out in a logical order. Equality of opportunity is at the core of the school's work. Staff have been trained to quickly identify the additional needs that pupils may have. Staff

are skilled at making necessary adaptations to their delivery of the curriculum. This enables pupils with SEND to learn successfully.

Staff receive purposeful training. This enables them to deliver the curriculum with expertise and enthusiasm. In recent years, the school has implemented useful activities to help children remember what they have learned. Pupils can talk confidently about what they have learned in recent days and weeks. However, in some subjects, pupils do not recall their learning from the term or year before. This hinders how well they build new learning on to current knowledge.

During lessons, staff check that pupils have understood and learned the important information from each lesson. However, the school is still refining its approaches to assessment in some subjects. In these subjects, checks on learning are not as purposeful as they are in the more established subjects.

Staff deliver the phonics curriculum consistently well. Pupils who need additional support are given prompt help by well-trained staff. This helps these pupils to catch up quickly. Staff are enthusiastic role models for reading. From the early years onwards, they share books daily, which pupils thoroughly enjoy. Over time, pupils develop into confident and highly competent readers.

Pupils move around the school sensibly. They are polite, friendly and eager to converse with adults. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They are completely immersed in their lessons and eager to learn. The school prioritises attendance. Staff build positive relationships with parents to ensure that families receive the support that they need to reduce absence levels.

Many children start school without the typical knowledge and skills for their age. Staff in the early years model rich language and vocabulary to engage children in conversation and quickly develop their speaking skills. This prepares children well for the demands of key stage 1.

Pupils' broader development is well considered. They learn about what constitutes a healthy relationship, how to maintain a positive mental attitude and how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils enjoy a range of clubs on offer, including golf, choir and dance. Pupils have an excellent understanding of fundamental British values. They say that everyone should be treated equally and understand why discrimination should not be tolerated.

Governors are a committed and knowledgeable group. They successfully hold school leaders to account for the quality of education that pupils receive. They also support the well-being and workload of leaders and staff. Staff acknowledge this. They are proud to work in the school and appreciate that leaders value them and pay careful consideration to their 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)

- In a minority of subjects, pupils do not revisit their learning from previous terms and years regularly. This means that they struggle to remember some of their previous learning. The school should ensure that pupils revisit and remember their learning, so that they can build on what they know as they move through the curriculum.
- In some subjects, the checking strategies that the school uses are in the early stages of implementation. This means that checks made by staff on what pupils know are not as effective as they could be, hence gaps in pupils' knowledge can go unaddressed. The school should refine its methods for checking what pupils remember to ensure that teachers identify and address any gaps in pupils' learning.

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 April 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	132188
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10348226
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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Justin McAuley
Headteacher	Sinead Walsh
Website	www.holyspirit.st-helens.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 April 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2022.
- This Roman Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Liverpool. Its last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in July 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due by the end of 2026.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.
- The school manages a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. She also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed some pupils reading to a trusted adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and breaktimes. She also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Ruth Moran, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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