

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Clare's Catholic Primary School

Hawthorn Road, Lache, Chester, Cheshire CH4 8HX

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 December 2024

Outcome

St Clare's 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 at St Clare's are proud of their school. They feel well cared for by staff and like to be with their friends. Pupils are kind and accepting. They say that everyone is welcome here.

The school has high aspirations for pupils' academic achievement. Pupils work hard. They leave Year 6 well prepared for secondary school.

Pupils behave very well. They respond to the school's high expectations. They listen attentively in class and join in with enthusiasm. Pupils are respectful to one another. They enact the school's vision of 'working together to reach their potential' in all that they do.

Pupils take advantage of the many opportunities that the school offers. They are especially proud to represent their school in sport. They have enjoyed success in competitive football, rugby, hockey and gymnastics. Pupils also develop their leadership skills. They feel a sense of pride when they are voted to become school councillors, sports' ambassadors and play leaders. Pupils are helped to understand the importance of service to others. For example, pupils recently held a special Advent calendar event that involved giving instead of receiving. This benefited families in the local area. Pupils enjoy the feeling that they get from helping others.

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

There have been changes to the staff team since the last inspection. Staff are appreciative of the support that they get from leaders. The training offer for staff is effective. This is evident in how well the school has maintained standards and how well

pupils achieve. In addition, the school has addressed the areas for improvement that were raised at the previous inspection.

The school places a high priority on early reading. The school's phonics programme starts swiftly in the Reception class. Children learn the sounds and letters that they need in order to learn to read. Children in the early years start to develop a love of reading. When staff read to them, children join in with stories that they know. As they move into key stage 1, pupils develop as fluent and accurate readers. Those that need additional help to keep up with the phonics programme are supported well by capable staff. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well in reading. Older pupils who act as reading ambassadors are good role models for those in younger years.

The school has planned its curriculum to suit the needs of its pupils. The key knowledge that pupils should learn in each subject has been identified from the early years upwards. Across school, thought has been given to how pupils build on what they have learned before. Staff regularly check how well pupils are learning. They adjust future teaching when necessary to ensure any misconceptions are addressed. In most subjects, pupils learn well. However, this is not the case in some aspects of a small number of subjects. In these subjects, some pupils do not learn some knowledge as well as they could. This is because sometimes staff do not explain new knowledge as clearly as they might. In addition, some learning activities do not enable pupils to grasp knowledge securely.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils' with SEND quickly. These pupils receive the support that they need to access the curriculum and learn well alongside their friends. The curriculum is adapted effectively so that pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils at St Clare's are friendly and caring towards one another. In the lunch hall and around school, pupils are calm and polite. They play happily together at breaktime and enjoy the many activities on offer.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. Through this, pupils learn about different types of families and how to keep healthy. Pupils particularly value their learning in the school's outdoor wooded area and the many visits, including residential trips. These activities ensure that pupils are well supported to build up resilience and perseverance. This helps them to increase their self-confidence and character. Pupils accept the ways in which people are different. Pupils learn about the community in which they live as well as cultures around the world.

The school has a relentless focus on improving pupils' attendance. It works diligently to support those families whose children do not attend as regularly as they should. Governors maintain oversight of the work that the school does to ensure that pupils attend school every day. There has been an improvement in attendance over time, especially for those pupils who miss the most school. As a result, most pupils do attend well.

Governors take the time that they need to assure themselves that pupils are learning well. They are proactive in taking care of staff's well-being and workload. As a result, staff feel valued.

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, some staff do not explain some new knowledge or design learning activities as clearly as they could. This means that some pupils, including some children in the early years, do not learn all that they should. The school needs to ensure that staff receive the training that they need to support them in ensuring that pupils can learn well and commit this learning to their long-term memory.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2015.

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	111311
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10348065
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	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mike Axon
Headteacher	Lucy Ward
Website	www.stclares.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 June 2019, under section 8 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 May 2023. The next section 48 inspection is likely to take place in 2027/28.
- The school offers a breakfast club and after-school provision each day.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

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. An inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in the 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.

- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector observed pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders. One inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the vice-chair of the governing body.
- An inspector met with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their views of school life.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents and carers. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspectors considered the views of staff who responded to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Frith Murphy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Claire Cropper

His Majesty's Inspector

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