

Inspection of St Oswald's Catholic Primary School

Montague Road, Liverpool, Merseyside L13 5TE

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2024

Outcome

St Oswald's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They behave well and they are kind towards each other. Pupils readily assume roles of responsibility, such as being members of the school council and play leaders. They told inspectors that they enjoy helping younger pupils to play cooperatively during social times.

The school community is welcoming to new pupils and their families. Staff and pupils embrace diversity. Pupils are highly respectful of the differences between people. Pupils, including children in the early years, said that they feel happy in school.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils enjoy their lessons, and they are attentive to their teachers. The school prioritises ensuring that all pupils are taught to read well, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils achieve well across a range of subjects.

Pupils appreciate the school's support for their well-being. They know that staff care for them deeply. Staff foster equally positive relationships with parents and carers. For example, the school works closely with parents to ensure that pupils are ready to learn each day. Pupils said that they enjoy the breakfast clubs and the wide range of after-school activities available to them, such as choir and sports clubs.

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

Since the last inspection, governors have appointed a new leadership team. Together with staff, governors are working successfully to continue to improve the standards that pupils achieve. The school ensures that it is considerate of staff's workload when introducing new initiatives or changes to the curriculum. Staff appreciate the school's support for their well-being and the opportunities to further develop their subject-specific expertise.

The curriculum is suitably broad and ambitious. The school has thought carefully about what it wants pupils to learn, from the early years to Year 6. It is in the process of further

refining the delivery of the curriculum across a range of subjects to ensure that pupils learn as well as they should. Staff are confident to try new approaches to delivering the curriculum. This is helping pupils to make better progress than they did in the past, particularly in reading.

In the main, most staff use the school's assessment strategies well to identify and address pupils' misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge. However, from time to time, some staff do not check that pupils' knowledge is secure before introducing new learning. On occasion, this hinders how deeply some pupils, including some with SEND, learn.

In the early years and key stage 1, pupils benefit from daily phonics sessions, which support them to become accurate readers. Staff are well trained in the teaching of early reading. They ensure that the books that pupils read match the sounds that they have learned. Skilled staff provide effective support for pupils who find reading more difficult. This helps these pupils to catch up quickly with their peers.

Pupils' love of reading continues across the school. For example, in key stage 2, pupils are keen to read out loud. They spoke knowledgeably about the books that they have read and their favourite authors.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND swiftly and accurately. For the most part, staff successfully adapt their delivery of the curriculum. This supports most pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as their classmates.

In the early years, children get off to a strong start. They learn to sing nursery rhymes and they enthusiastically retell the stories that they have heard. Staff engage in meaningful interactions with children. This helps children to learn how to play kindly with each other and respond to instructions quickly. Staff design learning that supports children to develop their knowledge and skills across the curriculum in readiness for key stage 1. Children are curious and increasingly independent learners.

The school prioritises improving pupils' rates of attendance. Staff identify pupils who do not attend as regularly as they should. The school is working closely with these pupils and their families to encourage better attendance. Despite this, some pupils remain absent from school too often. Consequently, some of these pupils are missing important learning and developing gaps in their knowledge.

Pupils enjoy the activities that the school provides to enhance their wider development. For example, pupils build their confidence through delivering class assemblies. Pupils learn about faiths and cultures different to their own. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Parents told inspectors that they are fully supportive of the school. For example, they appreciate the information that they receive about how well their children are learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. These pupils miss out on important learning, and some develop gaps in their knowledge as a result. The school should ensure that these pupils and their families are supported to understand the impact of being absent from school and to improve their rates of attendance.
- Some staff do not check that pupils' knowledge is secure before introducing new learning. This hinders a few pupils, including some with SEND, from building a rich body of subject knowledge across the curriculum. The school should ensure that staff are suitably equipped to identify and remedy pupils' misconceptions before introducing new concepts and ideas.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 in November 2018.

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	142523
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10321452
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	656
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anthony Hegarty
Headteacher	Donna Hay
Website	www.stoswaldsschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	31 October and 1 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in January 2024.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- This Catholic primary school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection took place in March 2024. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place before the end of 2029.

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 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.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and information on the school's website.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading and English, mathematics and geography. The inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum

documentation, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to some pupils about their work. The inspectors also looked at pupils' work and spoke with staff about the curriculum in some other subjects.

- The inspectors listened to a sample of pupils read to a trusted adult.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, subject leaders, including the early years leader, the safeguarding lead and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Meetings were also held with members of the governing body and representatives of the archdiocese and the local authority.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. They spoke formally with groups of pupils as well as talking to pupils in lessons. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspectors also spoke with some parents and carers.
- The inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Gill Jones, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Moira Atkins

Ofsted Inspector

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