

Inspection of a good school: St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary and Nursery School

30 Church Road, Liverpool, Merseyside L13 2BA

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy. They enjoy being part of a close-knit school community where everyone is included. Pupils learn about the importance of being tolerant and respectful. They spoke with pride about the way that everyone is accepted for who they are.

Staff forge strong relationships with pupils and their families. Two-year-old and three-year-old children settle quickly into the Nursery class. Pupils trust their teachers to take excellent care of them. Leaders do not tolerate bullying. If bullying happens, leaders deal with it effectively. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. Pupils live up to these expectations. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Pupils enjoy learning the well-designed curriculum that leaders provide. Pupils achieve highly.

Leaders encourage pupils to contribute to the wider school community. For example, pupils delight in being part of the Love Our School group. This group helps to look after their school environment by planting flowers and vegetables and painting picnic benches. Leaders ensure that pupils' voices are a central part of the school. Student councillors are consulted on many aspects of school life. They take part in regular walks of the school with leaders and talk about things that they would like to change. This helps pupils to feel a sense of belonging.

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

Leaders are highly ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders are committed to ensuring that social disadvantage is not a barrier to achievement. They provide a high-quality education which all pupils, including those children in the early years, benefit from. Leaders seek out opportunities to enrich pupils' educational experiences, for example through trips and workshops linked to the topics that pupils study. Pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about these memorable learning experiences.

Subject leaders have designed their curriculums to build pupils' knowledge from the early years to Year 6. Subject leaders are clear about what pupils should learn and in what order. In some subjects, where this important knowledge has been identified for some time, teachers check effectively whether pupils remember their learning. However, in other subjects, the precise knowledge that pupils should learn has only recently been refined. In these subjects, leaders have not ensured that teachers' checks are as carefully focused on whether pupils remember this important knowledge. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their learning.

Teachers have the expertise that they need to deliver the curriculum effectively. They explain new ideas with clarity. They address misconceptions as they arise. This helps pupils to learn well.

Leaders are sharply focused on understanding and removing any barriers to pupils' learning. This particularly applies to pupils with SEND. Leaders have a rigorous approach to identifying any additional needs that pupils may have. Teachers are skilled at providing appropriate support so that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

Leaders have given reading the highest priority. This begins in the Nursery class, where the children are exposed to a rich array of rhymes and stories. Younger children enjoy regular 'read with me' sessions with their parents and carers. Leaders take every opportunity to encourage pupils to develop regular reading habits. For example, pupils read, and are read to, daily. Older pupils read confidently and fluently. They enjoy reading.

Leaders have strengthened their phonics programme. Staff receive specialist training which supports them to deliver this programme effectively. Pupils begin learning phonics at the start of the Reception Year. They build their phonics knowledge securely all the way through key stage 1. Where gaps are identified, pupils receive carefully targeted support to ensure that they catch up quickly. This helps pupils to become accurate and confident readers.

Leaders have cultivated a calm atmosphere around the school. Staff model the behaviours that they want pupils to display. Pupils are respectful and attentive. Learning is seldom disrupted. Children in the early years quickly learn to follow routines that promote learning.

Leaders prioritise the personal development of pupils. Pupils learn about how to look after their physical and mental well-being. For example, they learn about different factors that could affect their mental health. Leaders provide a range of extra-curricular activities for pupils to engage with, such as art club and 'soul striders', the cross-country running club. Pupils value these opportunities to pursue their existing interests and develop new hobbies.

Leaders at all levels are highly committed to this school. Governors work closely with leaders to get the best for every pupil. Staff said that leaders are very considerate of their

workload and well-being. They enjoy working at this school because they feel appreciated and valued.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. They ensure that pupils' welfare is a high priority. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They know the pupils well and swiftly identify changes in a pupil's demeanour or behaviour which might indicate that something is wrong.

Leaders have developed strong relationships with parents. Leaders are tenacious advocates for these families. They provide timely support to pupils and their families where needed. Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure that pupils can access specialist help as required.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Leaders adapt the information that pupils learn in response to any safeguarding concerns that arise.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teachers are not rigorous enough in checking that pupils are learning the important knowledge identified in the curriculum. This means that some pupils can develop gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should roll out their plans to ensure that teachers use effective strategies to check whether pupils are learning and remembering the intended curriculum and use this information to shape future learning.

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 2017.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	104649
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10256171
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Pat Moloney
Headteacher	Claire Bellis-Knox
Website	www.stcuthberts.school
Date of previous inspection	15 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of a federation with another local primary school. The governing body are responsible for both schools in the federation.
- This is a Roman Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in November 2018.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- School leaders do not currently make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff.
- The inspector spoke with representatives of the governing body.
- The inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their experience of school. The inspector also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- The inspector checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including the school's single central record. The inspector met with leaders, staff and pupils to check on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the school.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of evidence, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and documents relating to school improvement.
- The inspector considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Sally Rix, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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