

Inspection of a good school: St Lewis Catholic Primary School

Mustard Lane, Croft, Mustard Lane, Croft, Warrington, Cheshire WA3 7BD

Inspection date:

24 October 2023

Outcome

St Lewis Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being part of this nurturing and caring school community. They develop positive relationships with staff and with each other. The school is highly ambitious for all pupils to become all that they 'are meant to be'. Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils feel safe. They said that their friends, and the staff, look after them well. The school supports pupils' well-being effectively, including their mental health. Older pupils enjoy looking after others, for example by helping younger pupils on the playground. Pupils have many opportunities to develop leadership skills. They are proud to act as ambassadors for the school.

Classrooms are calm. This allows pupils to do their best in lessons. Pupils, including children in the early years, behave well.

Pupils respect the differences between people. They have a keen sense of fairness and said that everyone is included in their school. Pupils' learning is successfully enhanced through a range of trips, including to places of cultural significance and a residential visit.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has successfully navigated the challenges associated with falling pupil numbers. It has done this while maintaining a sharp focus on the quality of education for its pupils. The school has adapted the curriculum to meet the needs of mixed-aged classes effectively.

The school has built an ambitious curriculum. It has designed the curriculum in well-ordered steps as pupils move through the classes and year groups. The school has identified the knowledge and experiences that it wants pupils to gain in each class, building on what they already know. Teachers know what they need to teach and when to

teach it. This provides a secure foundation for pupils' future learning. Pupils, including pupils with SEND, are well prepared for each of their next steps in education.

In subjects such as English and mathematics, the school checks how well the curriculum helps pupils to increase their knowledge over time. In a small number of other subjects, these checks are less well developed. This prevents the school from fully understanding the impact of these subject curriculums on how well pupils achieve.

Within lessons, teachers check how well pupils are learning the content. This helps them to identify which pupils need more help or guidance. The school makes sure that these pupils receive the support that they need to catch up and keep up with their classmates.

The school prioritises reading. Older pupils develop effective reading habits. They spoke enthusiastically about the books that they have read. Early reading begins as soon as children enter the early years. The well-ordered phonics curriculum is delivered successfully. Teachers make sure that pupils read books that are well matched to the sounds that they have learned. Teachers are swift to spot any pupils who are not keeping up with the programme. These pupils are helped to catch up quickly.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND at the earliest possible opportunity. Staff check carefully that the right support is in place for these pupils as they move through the school. The school ensures that pupils with SEND are able to take part in all aspects of school life.

Children in the early years settle into school life quickly. They have a well-developed understanding of classroom routines. This helps them to work and play safely and purposefully. The positive behaviour of pupils across the school supports their learning. They are attentive in class. When there is any low-level disruption, this is well managed by staff and little learning time is lost.

There is a well-designed programme to support pupils' wider development. Pupils learn how to develop healthy relationships, including online. They enjoy the many opportunities available, including the extensive range of after-school clubs and lunchtime activities.

Staff spoke positively about the strong teamwork in the school. Relationships across the school are warm and supportive. Staff know that leaders consider their workload when they introduce new initiatives. They said that they are proud to work at the school.

The school engages well with parents and carers to help support pupils' learning at school and at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's checks on the delivery and impact of the curriculum are less well established in a small number of subjects. This means that, in these subjects, the school does not have a clear enough understanding of how well the curriculum is implemented and the difference that it is making to pupils' learning. The school should ensure that it has greater assurance that the curriculum is helping pupils to know and remember more over time.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2014.

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	111368
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10291411
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	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Maria McGarry
Headteacher	Kathryn Berry
Website	www.stlewiscroft.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- This school is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided school within the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in February 2016. The next inspection will take place during this school year.
- The headteacher was appointed since the last inspection. There have been a number of changes in staffing to address the impact of a falling birth rate on pupil numbers and the school's budget.

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.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and with other leaders and members of staff. They also spoke with members of the governing body.

- An inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. They talked with curriculum leaders of these subject areas. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. They also observed some pupils reading to staff.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents and discussed the curriculums of other subjects with leaders.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class and as they moved around the school. They also observed pupils in the dining hall and while playing outside at lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors looked at the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also met with parents before school to find out their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Ian Shackleton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sandra Hamilton

Ofsted Inspector

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