

St Edmund's and St Thomas' Catholic Primary School

Oxford Road, Waterloo, Liverpool, Merseyside L22 8QF

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have maintained a good quality of education despite the recent number of unavoidable changes in staff.
- There is a shared commitment and vision which ensures that the majority of pupils achieve well from their starting points.
- Pupils make good progress from Year 1 to Year 6. The proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards are at least in line with the national average in English and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils make more rapid progress because of improved monitoring and the more effective support they now receive.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not yet make the progress they should from their starting points.
- Teaching is good. Most teaching promotes good progress and development. However, not all teachers set activities that allow pupils to extend their knowledge.
- Pupils feel safe and are looked after well by staff. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their appreciation of British values are promoted well.
- Pupils enjoy school. They enjoy a wide, topic-based curriculum in which they support and respect each other and are keen to do well.
- The governing body is well informed of the school's work and provides good levels of support and challenge. Governors have been particularly supportive in the recruitment of new staff.
- Some subject leaders new to their roles lack the precision in their use of assessment information needed to understand how well pupils learn in their subjects.
- The early years foundation stage requires improvement because staff do not yet work as a cohesive team. Some staff lack the necessary knowledge and skills to accurately record the progress that children make.
- The outside environment in the early years is underdeveloped as a place for children to extend their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, so that all pupils make the best possible progress, by:
 - making sure that teachers always set appropriate levels of challenge and activity which enable pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding
 - developing more targeted support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, sharpening subject leaders' monitoring of teaching so they focus more on how effectively groups of pupils learn in their subject areas.
- Accelerate progress and further improve outcomes for children in the early years, by:
 - working together as a team to ensure that children's progress is recorded accurately and is a true representation of children's abilities
 - ensuring that the outside learning area is planned, organised and resourced in a way that fully meets children's needs.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Despite recent unavoidable staff changes, clear, focused and determined leadership has led to more rapid improvement across the school. The local authority has provided ongoing support during these times of change.
- The able and skilled deputy headteacher initiates support and mentoring for less experienced staff and for those who are new to the team. As a result, there is a feeling of enthusiasm and camaraderie between the staff, who feel equipped to take the lead in their areas of responsibility.
- The leaders of English and mathematics have put in place good support to ensure that teachers provide the right level of challenge and encourage pupils to think for themselves. Consequently, pupils make even stronger progress in these subjects. More experienced subject leaders monitor pupil information accurately. This leads to improved progress, particularly in physical education, religious education, history and science.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the subjects they are responsible for monitoring. However, some subject leaders who are new to their roles do not yet take enough account of the impact of teaching on the progress of groups in their subject areas.
- The primary physical education and sport funding has been used successfully to widen the range of sport on offer. Pupils have opportunities to develop their skills in a range of different sports both after school and during lunchtime. They have had success in competition in the local community.
- The newly appointed special educational needs coordinator uses the extra funding to ensure that individual pupils' learning needs are now being met by adapting resources to meet their needs. She has a clear understanding of what still needs to be done to improve the progress being made by those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities from their starting points.
- Over the last two years, leaders have worked well with local authority advisers who have provided invaluable training and monitoring in order to implement improvements. As a result, good standards of progress have been maintained despite a number of staff changes.
- The school's curriculum is broad and rich and engages pupils through a range of opportunities. It enables pupils to make good progress, especially in reading and writing. Across the school, pupils routinely apply their English skills in a range of different subject areas.
- Leaders ensure that the religious education (RE) curriculum, in particular, develops pupils' social, spiritual, moral and cultural development. This prepares pupils for life in modern, diverse and multicultural Britain, through teaching about a variety of faiths.
- Leaders use the pupil premium grant well to support a small number of disadvantaged pupils.

- Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sports such as American basketball, football, multi-skills, fitness and cross-country. Mathematics and writing clubs are also well attended.

Governance of the school

- Governors provide good levels of support and challenge to school leaders. They do this by:
 - having a clear view of the strengths of the school and also where it can improve
 - having a clear view about the quality of teaching and the strategic direction of the school
 - bringing to their roles a wide set of qualities and professional skills and a good knowledge of the local community
 - ensuring that senior leaders check the impact of additional funding the school receives, such as the pupil premium, primary sports funding and money for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - actively seeking out appropriate training in areas such as safeguarding and child protection, so they keep abreast of any changes and apply them to their roles.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher has ensured that all staff and governors have read and acted on the latest guidance on keeping children safe in education. The school works successfully with its key partners to ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for. There is a very tangible sense of a strong safeguarding culture. This is evidenced by the level of care that staff demonstrate towards pupils and the clear trust that pupils have in the adults who look after them. Leaders give frequent reminders to pupils and parents about the importance of internet safety through regular newsletters and school activities. Pupils are also made aware of how to stay safe within their immediate locality, where there is a railway line and the sea.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The majority of teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons that ensure that pupils are interested and on task. However, some teachers do not routinely provide appropriate levels of challenge in learning activities or enough opportunities for pupils to think for themselves so they make even stronger progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning effectively. This encourages pupils to think through questions and explain their answers in detail.
- Presentation and handwriting are a strength across the wider curriculum. The same high expectations of pupils' work are reinforced across a wide range of subjects and also in topic books.

- Throughout the school, a committed and effective team of teaching assistants ably support teachers. They make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning and in improving pupils' progress.
- Teachers ensure that pupils learn and practise different kinds of writing. Even when focusing on composition and the use of expressive vocabulary, teachers reinforce the importance of correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils used commas effectively in a Year 2 lesson when writing descriptive text. In a Year 5 lesson, one pupil, when looking at similes and metaphors in a text, was inspired to write, 'Smoke rose out of the tall chimneys like Father Christmas's beard.'
- There is a strong ethos around reading. Recent interventions have already had a positive impact on reading, so that pupils make good progress. The wide range of reading materials, both online and in hard copies, encourages reading across all ages and abilities.
- The highly effective teaching of phonics has ensured that pupils can build words well and develop their reading skills confidently. Pupils of different abilities read fluently and with understanding to inspectors. One Year 4 pupil reading 'Little Women' was able to articulate clearly her feelings about the book.
- The teaching of mathematics is currently a whole-school focus. Teachers embed pupils' ability to reason and solve problems in mathematics in a way that captures their interest. There is clear evidence to show that pupils' skills in calculation and number are strong.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident learners, well equipped for their lessons and settle quickly to their work. They rise well to challenge when it is offered and persevere even when they are finding activities difficult.
- Pupils have the confidence to express themselves and are encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas during lessons and at other times in the school day. They listen to each other and are actively encouraged to show respect and consideration towards one another.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. Pupils understand the Christian values and principles that act as a guide to behaviour in school. There is a strong community feel and a culture of caring in the school. Pupils reflect on, and take responsibility for, their own actions.
- Pupils learn how to eat well and stay healthy, physically and mentally. Pupils have good opportunities to take on extra responsibilities. For example, Year 6 'bully busters' are on hand should the need arise, while other Year 6 pupils initiate games with the younger children such as hide and seek or skipping games. The school council and eco council provide a positive force for change in school.
- School breaktimes are well resourced. Pupils like the way the playground is organised

into different areas for different age groups where they have the space to run and play games like football or find a quiet space to chat with their friends.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school has a calm and orderly atmosphere. Pupils behave well around the school, holding doors open for adults and each other and generally showing consideration for one another. The majority of pupils the inspectors spoke to said that behaviour was good.
- Pupils know about the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and homophobic bullying. Pupils say that any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly. Teaching assistants are trained to spot 'trigger points' for more vulnerable pupils, so they can provide appropriate support.
- Pupils are eager to help each other out in class. Only occasionally are pupils' attitudes less than good when they are given work that does not offer enough challenge.
- Pupils enjoy school and do not like to miss their time in lessons or with their friends. Attendance is in line with attendance nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders have successfully addressed the underachievement in 2016, following a number of staff changes. The outcomes for pupils in Year 6 in 2017, in reading, writing and mathematics combined, are above those achieved by Year 6 pupils nationally.
- The school has seen huge improvements at both key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2017. Year 6 progress in reading was in the top 10% of schools nationally, while progress for Year 6 pupils in writing and mathematics was similar to that of other pupils nationally. Pupils' progress in key stage 1 has also improved and in 2017 was well above the progress of their peers nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils make better progress than previously. The number of disadvantaged pupils in school is small but extra money is being used wisely to ensure that they do well from their starting points.
- Phonics is consistently strong. The proportion of pupils in Year 1 who achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check is consistently above the national figures. The most able pupils read fluently and with good comprehension. They are able to predict and infer and read widely. Less able pupils read with a fluency that is appropriate to their development.
- Writing skills are good and also showed improvement in 2017. By the time pupils are in upper key stage 2, they structure different types of writing well and use interesting vocabulary, similes and metaphors to good effect.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics and their progress is similar to that of other pupils nationally. They demonstrate strong skills in their number and calculation work and are developing their skills in reasoning and problem-solving.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not yet make the progress they should from their starting points. Leaders have begun to target support more precisely. Evidence shows that this is helping pupils to catch up.
- The most able pupils make good progress from their starting points. Work in books shows they are reaching higher than age-related standards in reading, writing and mathematics as they move through school. Some middle ability pupils would benefit from teachers setting more appropriate levels of challenge and planning opportunities for independent working to enable them to make even stronger progress.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The leadership of the early years foundation stage requires improvement because of staff changes and the lack of collaboration across the Nursery, Reception and Reception/Year1 settings. Recording of children's progress is not reliable and so does not represent an accurate picture of their abilities from the start of Nursery to the end of Reception.
- Many children start their time in the early years with knowledge and skills that are broadly typical for their age and stage of development and make good progress through Nursery. Assessment information for children at the start of Reception shows considerably less progress, but the year ends with children in Reception broadly in line with other children nationally. This indicates a lack of progress from their starting points.
- The outdoor area is not as stimulating as that indoors. It is underdeveloped as a place for children to extend their learning or explore a wide range of activities, particularly in reading, writing and number. Writing opportunities in the classroom do not stretch the abilities of the most able children.
- There are warm and caring relationships in the early years settings. Children cooperate well and learn how to share and take turns. They settle quickly when they come into school and listen well to instructions.
- Children are presented with activities that grab and hold their attention, encourage cooperation and conversation and fuel their imaginations and inquisitiveness about the world around them. For example, one activity was to build three beds for the bears in Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Boys set about the task with great gusto.
- Children are kept safe because all staff adhere closely to safeguarding procedures and risk assessments. Children are happy, safe and well cared for in the setting.
- Parents are kept well informed and know how well their children are doing. They attend parent workshops and after-school sessions which are run by teaching assistants. They are encouraged to support their children's learning at home, and parents are very positive about the experience their children have in the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	104928
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10037788

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	354
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Kendall
Headteacher	Mr Kieran Loftus
Telephone number	0151 928 5586
Website	www.stedmundsprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin.StEdmundsandStThomas@schools.sefton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 April 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is larger than the average primary school.
- There is full-time provision in both Nursery and Reception and a mixed Reception/Year 1 class.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic heritages. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well below average. However, the number of these pupils is growing.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below average.

- The school met the current floor standards in 2017, which are the minimum standards expected nationally for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. They observed learning in lessons. These included joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors listened to a number of pupils read from Year 1 to Year 6.
- Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work across a range of subjects, and talked to the pupils about their learning. English and mathematics leaders joined inspectors for the book scrutiny.
- Inspectors talked to parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors took account of the views of eight staff and 18 pupils who completed the online questionnaires. They also took into account the 51 free-text responses.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the chair and members of the governing body, representatives of the local authority and the archdiocese and with school leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including: the school's own information on pupils' current and recent progress; planning of work in different subjects; the school's self-assessment and school development plans; leaders' action plans and anonymised performance management documents; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Maggie Parker, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Iain Sim	Ofsted Inspector
Sandie La Porta	Ofsted Inspector

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