

St Leo's and Southmead Catholic Primary School

Serving the Community

Lickers Lane, Whiston, Prescot, Merseyside L35 3SR

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2018

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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and her senior leaders are thoroughly committed to constantly improving the quality of education at the school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and contributes effectively to the good progress pupils make.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the work of the school.
- Governors know the school well. They challenge leaders strongly and are effective in holding them to account.
- Teaching is effective because teachers have good subject knowledge that enables them to plan interesting lessons.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well at all times. They have positive attitudes to learning.
- Across a range of subjects, almost all pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- Children in the early years make good progress. Most of them are ready for Year 1 by the time they finish their Reception Year.
- Leaders plan actions for school improvement well, but their success criteria do not precisely relate to pupils' achievement.
- Improved progress in writing at the end of Year 6 in 2017 was still below the national average.
- Teachers occasionally do not give work that challenges the most able pupils.
- Recent rates of pupils' absence have been too high, although there are signs of improvement.
- Sometimes, staff in the early years do not ask questions to encourage children to think or deepen their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Firmly establish the recent strategies to improve the standard of writing by the end of Year 6 so that pupils' progress is at least in line with the national average.
- Ensure that leaders include in their action plans for improvement measurable success criteria that relate to pupils' achievement.
- Make sure that teachers more consistently provide work that stretches the most able pupils.
- Ensure that all staff in the early years ask children questions that more consistently challenge them to think hard and deepen their learning.
- Further reduce pupils' rates of absence by embedding the school's recently adopted strategies.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and her senior leaders have ensured that teaching has further improved since the last inspection. They now make more regular checks on the quality of teaching, feeding back next steps to staff and following up to ensure that they carry them out. They also hold more frequent meetings to evaluate how well pupils make progress, especially in English and mathematics. They provide more focused support to pupils who need to catch up. The success of their actions can be seen in the good and improving progress current pupils make across a range of subjects.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced, with a varied programme of activities to enhance pupils' learning. These include visits to places of interest, such as a cotton mill to support the teaching of a history topic. The curriculum contributes effectively to the good progress pupils make.
- Senior leaders are honest about the school's strengths and areas for development. They accurately evaluate the school's priorities and have drawn up an appropriate action plan for improvement. This includes focuses such as improving writing and reducing pupils' absences. However, the success criteria that leaders include do not precisely focus on pupils' outcomes in a measurable way. This makes it difficult for leaders to be clear enough about the impact that improvements are having on pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher is committed to continuously improving the quality of education the school provides. Leaders accurately analysed assessment information at the end of 2016. Noting the poor writing performance of Year 6, they brought in a range of actions to improve teaching and learning and raise the standard of achievement. These actions included collaborating with a school in a neighbouring local authority to observe and learn from strong practice in writing. Although there was a marked improvement in progress in Year 6 at the end of 2017, assessment information for that year shows that progress in writing was still below the national average in key stage 2. Leaders have a clear focus on further improving pupils' progress in writing by the end of Year 6. Their assessment information and pupils' work indicate that current pupils in key stage 2 make good progress.
- Leaders support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and promote fundamental British values effectively. They do this through a planned programme of lessons in religious education and personal, social and health education. Pupils also enjoy a range of clubs, such as hockey, choir and science club, which contribute well to their overall development. Leaders ensure that all pupils have a range of cultural and educational experiences outside the classroom through the school's 'Exit profile'. This is a programme of varied events, such as visits to the museum, the beach and an art gallery, which all pupils experience by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6.
- Leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding. They provide individual support according to pupils' needs. This ranges from extra help with English and mathematics to providing places at the school's breakfast club. Consequently, current

pupils who are eligible for the funding make good progress.

- Leaders make effective use of the primary school physical education and sport premium. They use sports coaches to provide training for staff to improve their confidence and teaching skills. They also use the money to increase pupils' participation in competitions with other schools. There is a regular 'Sports week', when coaches introduce pupils to sports that may be less familiar to them. Many go on to take up some of these sports outside school.
- The school uses funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities to good effect. As a result, most current pupils make good progress from their starting points. The leader for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities (SENCo) is experienced and has received appropriate training. She has a clear overview of the range of needs and manages well the programme of support for pupils.
- Staff appreciate the range of training opportunities that leaders provide. These include formal events and visits to other schools to see effective teaching in action. The training contributes well to the good standard of teaching in the school. Staff also feel that leaders are supportive and do all they can to reduce excessive workload.
- Leaders of all subjects, including English and mathematics, are enthusiastic and have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their subject. They have effective procedures for checking on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. These include observations of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and analysis of assessment information.
- Parents who responded to the online survey were overwhelmingly positive about the school. They typically described it using words like 'fabulous' and they said that their children are 'well looked after and nurtured'.
- The local authority and the archdiocese have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They provide effective support at a level appropriate to school's needs.

Governance of the school

- Governors are proud of the school and support leaders and staff well. They regularly visit the school and have a clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses because the headteacher provides them with clear information.
- Governors are knowledgeable about safeguarding and have received appropriate training. They have a range of useful experience and expertise, including education, finance and business, which help them to fulfil their roles effectively.
- Governors challenge leaders well. They hold the headteacher to account effectively, asking searching questions about various matters, such as pupils' achievement and leaders' plans for improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Pupils feel safe there and know how to stay safe because adults keep them informed. Adults have a secure understanding of safeguarding procedures and know the signs of abuse.
- The designated safeguarding lead keeps detailed records of reported concerns about pupils, although these are not numerous. She takes swift action to follow up any issues that arise from these concerns.
- The school's record of the necessary checks on members of staff complies with the relevant guidance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have taken effective action to improve teaching since the last inspection. In writing, for example, they have introduced effective new strategies, such as a more focused use of resources, like dictionaries, and more frequently creating a physical setting, such as a jungle, to stimulate pupils' imagination. In mathematics, teachers now provide pupils with more regular opportunities to develop their reasoning skills. These actions have helped to ensure that current pupils across all year groups make good progress in a range of subjects.
- Teachers and teaching assistants effectively ask questions to enable pupils to think for themselves and explain their responses. The large majority of pupils talk confidently about their work and are clear about the knowledge, understanding and skills they are acquiring.
- Teachers make effective use of other adults to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They also match the work well to pupils' needs, which means that this group of pupils makes good progress.
- Teachers expect pupils to work and behave well in lessons and they clearly convey this message. Staff have effective ways of gaining pupils' attention on the infrequent occasions when there is misbehaviour. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to learning are positive, and the large majority of them make good progress.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their English and mathematical skills across the curriculum. For example, in key stage 1, they write conclusions about science investigations, and in geography in key stage 2 they construct charts to show rainfall. In Year 4, pupils have regular opportunities to develop their communication skills when they discuss challenging questions, such as 'Is it ever right to keep secrets from people?'
- Teachers make effective use of resources, such as checklists, to enable pupils to make sure that they have understood their work for themselves and have achieved all the aspects required by the task. Staff also find interesting ways to correct pupils' misconceptions. For example, if pupils have not grasped a particular topic in science, teachers organise science clubs outside school time to help them understand.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it effectively to plan lessons that keep pupils interested and provide suitably challenging work for most of them. However, the most able pupils sometimes do not do work that stretches them. For example, in geography in key stage 2, teachers occasionally limit the most able pupils' ability to

make decisions about the content of their work because they present the task in a way that is too structured.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe in school and understand the ways in which adults keep them safe. They know, for example, that visitors to school must wear a badge to show they are allowed to be there.
- Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have to take on various roles, such as that of school prefect in Year 6. This is effective in helping them to develop a sense of responsibility.
- Pupils know how to stay safe, such as when they are online, because adults give them the information they need. For example, they understand that they must not reveal personal information when they are using the internet. They understand the different forms of bullying that exist and said that it never happens. The same is true for the use of inappropriate language, such as the misuse of the word 'gay'.
- Pupils benefit from the visits and clubs that the school provides, as they support well their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy activities that range from a visit to a museum to camping trips.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured enough to approach trusted adults and talk with them. They appreciate their education. They said that their teachers challenge them to work hard. They enjoy coming to school and said that lessons are 'fun'.
- Pupils understand the importance of being healthy. They recognise that school leaders support this well by, for example, providing free fruit to all pupils every day and ensuring that healthy lunches are available.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is good. They play well together in the playground and behave well in the school building. There are occasional examples of misbehaviour, but staff have effective strategies for managing these.
- Attendance has been below the national average in recent years. Leaders have made sure that improving attendance is a key focus of the school's development plan. They have recently put a number of new strategies in place to reduce pupil absences, including providing rewards to pupils who have high attendance and increased collaboration with the local authority's attendance service. The rate of absence so far in this school year is much improved, but leaders recognise their recent actions still need to be fully established.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' work and the school's own assessment information indicate that most current pupils make good progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, and are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. This is because teaching is well planned and leaders have provided staff with useful training and strategies to secure continuous improvement.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged make good progress from their starting points. Leaders use half-termly progress meetings to analyse pupils' achievement and identify areas where they need support. They then provide, for example, extra lessons in mathematics or English to secure stronger progress.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress. The SENCo efficiently manages the school's provision and effectively identifies pupils' needs. Pupils benefit from carefully planned support activities that help them to achieve well.
- Pupils read fluently and with a level of comprehension that matches their age and stage of development. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics to help them read unfamiliar words, when appropriate. The teaching of phonics is effective and, typically, a large majority of pupils in Year 1 achieve well in the national phonics check.
- Published assessment information shows that there was a dip in pupils' progress in writing by the end of Year 6 in 2016. Leaders took swift and effective action, resulting in an improvement in progress in 2017, although this was still below the national average. Leaders have continued with their strategies, recognising that they need to continue to establish their effectiveness. They are confident that current pupils in Year 6 are on track to make a further improvement in their progress in writing by the end of 2018. Pupils' work and the school's assessment information support this position.
- Pupils make good progress in other subjects, as well as English and mathematics, acquiring appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills. For example, in geography, pupils in key stage 2 can explain features of volcanoes and understand how to locate countries of the world using atlases. In art in key stage 1, they show a good development of their drawing skills, for instance, and can represent facial features. However, on some occasions, for example in key stage 2 science, teachers do not provide sufficiently challenging work for the most able pupils.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge that are below those that are typical for their age and stage of development. Over time, an increasing percentage of children have achieved a good level of development, the most recent proportion, in 2017, being about two thirds of the Reception Year group. This represents good progress and most children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The leader of the early years, though new to the school, is experienced, knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She devises action plans that follow the whole-school priorities, such as improving writing, but has also identified other areas for development. She has put

actions in place further to improve, for example, mathematics and reading and to maintain the improvements seen in the last school year. She has a good overview of children's progress and keeps a close check on the quality of the provision in the early years.

- Children show that they feel safe through their good behaviour and positive attitudes to their learning. There are no breaches of the welfare requirements, and staff carefully follow the safeguarding procedures and policies that apply to the whole school.
- Leaders involve parents effectively in their child's education. Parents appreciate the transition activities, such as children's visits to their new classroom, that take place before entry into Nursery and into Reception. Parents enjoy activities in school throughout the year, such as 'Read along' and assemblies, both of which enable them to find out what their child has been learning.
- Children who are disadvantaged make good progress. This is because staff provide effective additional activities to support their learning in, for example, understanding of number and developing language skills.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers provide mainly well-planned, interesting activities that are sufficiently demanding for the majority of pupils. However, just occasionally, most-able children find tasks too easy, such as identifying numbers up to seven, and there is no strategy for deepening the child's knowledge.
- Staff mainly use effective questioning to encourage children to think hard about their work. Sometimes, however, staff miss opportunities to make the most of children's learning time by asking more challenging questions, focusing instead on giving words of encouragement to complete a task.

School details

Unique reference number	104475
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10043211

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	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Kelly
Headteacher	Jeanette Grundy
Telephone number	0151 477 8410
Website	stleossouthmead.co.uk
Email address	jeanette.grundy@knowsley.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 October–1 November 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for their SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is substantially above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum

expectations for attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

- The school is part of a collaborative of other, similar schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations of learning in all year groups. Some of these were joint observations with the headteacher. The headteacher was also present at inspection team meetings.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation summary, action plans for school improvement, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, assessment information, minutes of meetings of the governing body and records connected with the safeguarding of children.
- Inspectors had discussions with various stakeholders, including the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, other members of staff, the chair and other members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, a representative of the archdiocese, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and analysed pupils' work in a range of subjects. They also looked at the work of children in the early years.
- The lead inspector evaluated 25 responses received through Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, during the inspection. There were no other survey responses.

Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ian Shackleton

Ofsted Inspector

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