

Haydock English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

Piele Road, Haydock, St Helens, Merseyside WA11 0JY

Inspection dates

17–18 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
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

- Leaders have set high expectations for pupils' learning and conduct. The headteacher's excellent leadership has enabled staff to tackle weaknesses promptly and make rapid improvements.
- Pupils rise to the high expectations that their teachers have of their learning and behaviour. Their friendliness and politeness embody the school's well-established values. Pupils behave exceptionally well.
- Teaching is good across the school. It is improving in all year groups. As a result, pupils' progress is good and, in some year groups, is improving very rapidly.
- Staff respond well to the high expectations that their leaders have of them. Strong teamwork is evident in every aspect of the school's work.
- Teachers regularly check pupils' learning and help them to improve it. They encourage pupils to keep improving their own learning.
- Pupils' ability to read and respond to different texts is getting better. This is because most staff teach pupils explicitly how to use texts to answer questions fully. Occasionally, some staff do not teach these skills well enough.
- Progress in mathematics is also increasing fast because, in most classes, staff require pupils to explain their mathematical thinking as they solve problems. Progress slows when this does not happen.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. They feel very safe and know how to keep themselves safe. They appreciate and benefit from the excellent care that they receive from staff and from each other.
- Pupils readily reach out to help others. They have a strong sense of caring, of belonging to the school community, and of having a part to play in the wider community.
- Children make good progress in all areas of learning across the Nursery and Reception classes. They make particularly good progress in communicating and in learning to look after themselves and relate to others.
- Governors have an extensive range of skills, knowledge and understanding, which they use exceptionally well to challenge leaders. They make a very valuable contribution to school improvement.
- Senior and subject leaders carry out an extensive range of monitoring activities to help improve teaching and learning. However, they do not consistently check that all staff act on the points for improvement arising from these activities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eliminate the remaining inconsistencies in teaching by sharing the excellent practice seen in some classes so that:
 - in reading, pupils' ability to read, understand and respond to texts is taught equally well in all classes
 - in mathematics, staff consistently require pupils to explain their mathematical thinking as they solve problems.
- Deepen the impact of effective leadership and management by:
 - refining the checks made on teaching and learning
 - systematically following up how well staff are acting on what they have been told to improve.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders reacted quickly to the surprise drop in progress and standards in reading in 2017. Their thorough analysis of the test papers showed that too many pupils did not finish the test or failed to answer questions properly to gain full marks. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, supported by governors and staff, these issues have been tackled head on and pupils are making good progress.
- English and mathematics are well led and managed. Leaders of other subjects are at different levels in their development, but they understand their responsibilities and are carrying them out increasingly well.
- Leaders have helped staff to reach a whole-school understanding of how to teach reading and how to help pupils use texts to find information and answer questions fully. Similarly, they have helped staff to understand why there must be an emphasis on requiring explanations in mathematics. This is to help pupils to understand mathematical concepts so that they are able to use them better when solving problems. However, in a small number of classes, these principles are not fully established.
- Leaders have made sure that teaching is good and improving. Their monitoring is extensive and areas for improvement are clear. However, they do not check systematically enough that what they have asked staff to do is being done. As a result, there remain some inconsistencies in a small number of classes that mean that pupils do not always do as well as they can in some year groups.
- The school improvement plan is a very useful working document that is flexible enough to deal with what arises. It was quickly adjusted after the national test results to tackle the weaknesses found. It arises from accurate self-evaluation and informs the targets set for the headteacher and the staff.
- Performance management procedures are effective and lead to improvement. They are followed up with carefully selected training for staff in relevant areas.
- The curriculum has been thought through very carefully. It is lively and exciting, motivates pupils to find out more for themselves, and leads to good progress in most subjects and most year groups.
- The quality of artwork around the school, the investigative work that pupils are currently doing in history, and the programming skills that they are acquiring in computing are just three examples of the in-depth learning taking place in a range of subjects. Where relevant, subjects are linked in topic work and pupils have many opportunities to use and extend their literacy skills within topics.
- An extensive programme of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities adds to the pupils' enjoyment of learning. For example, the space lab visiting the school during the inspection was helping to consolidate pupils' understanding of the planets they were studying in science.
- The curriculum also includes many opportunities for pupils to learn about British values and the importance of respecting different faiths and beliefs. Built into this learning are the principles of freedom, equality and diversity, as well as the dangers associated with

extremism. Pupils could talk knowledgeably about all these things. The school helps pupils to think beyond now to becoming valuable members of society.

- The primary school sports premium is used effectively. Year on year, the number of pupils taking part in different sports and sporting competitions in the school and between schools is increasing. Pupils very much enjoy the time scheduled for sport. The funding has been used well to introduce a wide range of activities so that there is something to appeal to everyone.
- The pupil premium funding is also used effectively. Leaders monitor the impact of the spending to make sure that it is helping the pupils to catch up with their peers. As a result, the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others are narrowing.
- Good leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is enabling these pupils to make good progress. The school puts in place what it can from its own resources and it works closely with external agencies to get additional help as quickly as possible for identified pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governance is highly effective. The well-established, multi-skilled governing body holds leaders to account for every aspect of the school's work. For example, governors called an extraordinary meeting to find out what had gone wrong in the tests last year. They then requested, and now receive, monthly updates on how well the new approaches to teaching reading and mathematics are working. They know the progress that all groups of pupils are making because they check it regularly.
- Governors know the school extremely well and they contribute effectively to school improvement. They have helped to establish a culture in which personal development is given due attention, alongside academic development, so that the school can turn out well-rounded individuals ready to take their place in society.
- All relevant training is up to date. Governors make sure that the pupil premium and the primary sports premium are spent effectively to make a difference to the pupils. They also ensure that performance management procedures are carried out properly. They keep a close eye on the quality of teaching and learning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders place a high value on safeguarding training, ensuring that it is up to date and regularly revisited. For most staff, training goes beyond the minimum required.
- Systems and procedures are secure and known to all staff and governors. Pupils understand them and leaders make sure that parents and carers know them too. The school reaches out to families to support them and their children.
- The well-maintained emotional health and welfare register records sensory needs and vulnerabilities and provides an early-warning system so that staff can help pupils as quickly as possible.
- Case studies confirm that the school works well with a range of agencies to support pupils in all aspects relevant to safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers are reflective and professional. They plan together across year groups and ensure that pupils in the same year group have the same opportunities to learn and succeed. They have high expectations of their pupils' learning and behaviour and pupils respond well.
- Pupils remain focused on their learning in lessons because teachers ensure that the work that they are doing is interesting and at the right level for them. Work is usually hard enough to require pupils to make a great deal of effort to do well. Staff encourage pupils to try their best to succeed and pupils respond accordingly.
- Reading is a high priority after last year's results and it is being taught well in most classes. In phonics sessions in key stage 1, the good emphasis on word-building, spelling and reading is developing early reading and writing skills well.
- Throughout the school, staff help to build pupils' confidence in reading, extend their vocabulary and teach them how to glean deeper information more quickly from different texts. Well-planned, specific reading sessions with exciting and motivating activities inspire pupils and foster a love of reading.
- Exemplary teaching in Year 6 is rapidly helping pupils to increase their ability to read, understand and answer questions fully. Skilled questioning is enabling pupils to become increasingly sophisticated in their responses to challenging texts. Staff build up the skills that pupils need, step by step, and reinforce them at every opportunity.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved, with most teachers constantly requiring pupils to calculate efficiently and explain their reasoning. However, these principles are not entirely consistent in all year groups. Nevertheless, in most, they are contributing well to the pupils' improving progress in mathematics.
- Writing is taught well, with due attention to grammar, punctuation and spelling. Staff mostly encourage pupils to write neatly and present their work well. It was noted that there is some inconsistency in these areas in some year groups.
- Teachers match work well to pupils' different levels of ability in different subjects. An excellent example was observed in history in Year 6. Here, the most able pupils engaged in a passionate discussion about the Tudor king's desire to have a son, while least-able pupils explored the meaning of words in a historical text. Meanwhile, a catch-up group worked on how to glean relevant information from a text. All pupils made good progress, albeit in different ways.
- Most staff are skilled at asking pupils questions that probe their understanding, deepen their thinking and encourage them to think for themselves in different subjects. Staff successfully encourage pupils to use and extend the knowledge and skills they gain in one subject, to help them in another.
- Well-briefed teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Working with teachers, they help pupils in different ability groups understand and improve their learning in class, in small groups or individually, as need demands.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The importance placed on this aspect of the school's work is evident in everything. Staff and governors make sure the school is a safe, nurturing place in which pupils can flourish.
- Staff encourage open debate on moral dilemmas. They gently encourage pupils to share views and opinions, explore feelings and learn how to deal with different situations. An excellent example of this was observed when some Year 6 pupils were affected by events in the book they were reading in class.
- Pupils praise staff highly for the way they listen to and help them, should they face any issues, in or out of school. Pupils are not aware of any bullying. They understand the difference between bullying and falling out and say that neither is tolerated because staff are 'on to it' immediately. They feel very safe in the school and praise the adults for the high quality of care they provide for them.
- Pupils are confident learners who are happy to talk about their work and the good progress they are making. Their enjoyment of learning and their pride in the school shine through everything they say. Relationships are excellent.
- Pupils see themselves as valued members of the school community, whose views are listened to and acted upon. They relish their responsibilities, for example, as school and eco councillors, and want to celebrate their school. This was clearly evident in a poem the head boy and girl wrote to give inspectors their views.
- Pupils also understand their place in the wider community. For example, they become members of a 'dawn patrol' who check on old people living alone and raise the alarm should they find any issues. They talk proudly about how pupils already at high school look out for new arrivals and how they will do the same when they get there.
- The large majority of parents with whom inspectors spoke, or who responded to Parent View, expressed praise for the school and the work of the staff. The vast majority of parents feel that their children are happy, safe and well cared for.
- Pupils realise and very much appreciate how the changes in the way literacy, especially reading, and mathematics are taught are helping them to make faster progress. They thoroughly enjoy the new challenges they face and are working hard to do the best they can. Their attitudes to learning are exemplary.
- Pupils know the dangers associated with the internet and mobile phones and what to do should they encounter any information or requests that might be unsafe. They know how to keep themselves safe in and out of school. They also know the importance of not allowing others to persuade them to do something about which they feel uncomfortable or know to be wrong.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.

- Staff and pupils treat each other with consideration and respect. Adults model respectful and caring behaviour throughout the day and pupils learn to do the same.
- Behaviour management policies are well thought through and applied consistently throughout the school. Pupils know and appreciate the system of rewards and sanctions and they see them as fair and just.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are relatively rare and quickly dealt with. Pupils show high levels of maturity as they speak about different kinds of behaviour and how to deal with them. They say some pupils' behaviour 'is not as good as it can be' but also, 'They can't help it and need more help and support...they take longer to grow up' and 'must still be included in everything.'
- Play and lunchtimes are happy, social occasions for the pupils. Pupils are kept safe at all times, including at breakfast and after-school club. Systems and supervision are well established and any issues are immediately addressed, recorded, reported and dealt with appropriately.
- Attendance is in line with the national average and is improving. Systems for checking absences are effective. Good attendance is rewarded and has a high profile in the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Notwithstanding the explainable dip in results in 2017, pupils in all year groups are making good progress in a wide range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are on track to do much better this year and in future years. In all year groups, good progress and rapidly rising standards are evident in pupils' books, in lessons and in the records tracking pupils' progress.
- Pupils have good phonics skills. They use them well in reading and in writing, where they make laudable attempts at spelling. Outcomes of the phonics screening checks for pupils in Year 1 are rising.
- Reading skills are improving rapidly throughout the school. Most pupils read fluently and expressively and are keen to share their enjoyment of reading with others. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 speak confidently and articulately about different kinds of books and how they can learn more by reading more and even by simply reading for pleasure. They fare less well when they have to write about their reading, but their ability to do so is getting better.
- Pupils make good use of the many opportunities they have for writing. They use their reading and writing skills well in other subjects, for example to write letters, diaries and chronological reports.
- In mathematics, pupils explain how teachers requiring them to 'convince me, prove to me' is making them better mathematicians. This was evident even in Year 2, where pupils were solving some complex problems that required them to use their multiplication and division skills.
- A small number of pupils still lack the resilience to work things out for themselves in mathematics and practical equipment is not always readily available to help them do

so. Occasionally, teachers do not require enough explanation from pupils to help them clarify their thinking.

- Pupils make good progress across different subjects. Topic books and discussions with pupils show that their enthusiasm for learning, and their determination to do well, extends to all subjects.
- The gaps in progress and attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are greater than found nationally. However, they are narrowing. These pupils are making at least the same good progress as other pupils.
- Pupils with SEN and/or disabilities are also making good progress. Well-briefed, competent support staff make a good contribution to the progress of these pupils as well as that of other pupils. They support learners in class, helping them to catch up or take their learning further, or work with them in small groups away from class to prepare them to take a full part in their lessons.
- The increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, also make good progress. Staff ensure that they understand what they are expected to learn and help them to develop competence in speaking English.
- The most able pupils also make good progress. Through additional challenges, and opportunities to find out more for themselves, these pupils are working at greater depth in several subjects.
- Overall, pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

Good

- When children join the school, their skills and knowledge are below those typical for their age. There are particular weaknesses in language and communication and in social and emotional skills. Staff quickly find out what the children already know and can do. They use the information well to plan exciting activities that spark the children's interest and rouse their curiosity.
- Good leadership and effective teaching have led to good progress in this age group. Although still below the national average, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development rose in 2017. There is a clear determination to build on this improvement and sustain the rise in standards. Children are being prepared well for their work in Year 1.
- There is a lively mix of adult-led activities and those the children choose themselves. Staff are skilled at gently directing children towards activities that will help them fill gaps in their learning. Relationships between staff and children are excellent, as is the attention to the children's health and welfare and their safety and well-being.
- Staff check children's learning constantly. They keep effective records, written and visual, which show the children's considerable improvement over time. The information is shared with parents, who, in turn, share information about the children's various achievements at home.
- Relationships with parents are good. However, a small number of parents feel that they do not get enough information on a daily basis. While staff are available to

parents each day, they are nevertheless looking at ways to improve daily communication further.

- The sharp focus on reading, writing, speaking and listening is increasing the children's literacy skills. Although some children have limited language, they readily communicate with adults, including visitors, and with each other. They are proud to show how well they are doing, how they can form letters, read and, for the most able, begin to write correctly punctuated sentences in full. They use their phonics skills well in all of this.
- Children are already starting to explain their mathematical thinking as they add and subtract and solve simple problems in mathematics. Activities around the classrooms and in the outdoor area provide children with many opportunities to use and extend their early literacy and numeracy skills.
- The well-organised classrooms and outdoor area make it easy for children to move from one activity to another with the minimum of fuss. Behaviour is excellent. Children settle quickly, readily follow instructions and are very confident with the well-established routines.
- Additional funding is used effectively to provide resources and support for disadvantaged children. Leaders have a good understanding of the impact that the funding has on the children's learning. These children make the same good progress as all other children.

School details

Unique reference number	104818
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10045151

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	337
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Dooner
Headteacher	Karen Prescott
Telephone number	01942 723552
Website	www.hemcps.co.uk
Email address	englishmartyrs@sthelens.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 April 2014

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion of disadvantaged pupils.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, is average.
- The school has higher proportions in all four categories mentioned above than at the last inspection.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of lessons in all year groups. Two observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the lead inspector sampled learning in all classes in the early years and key stage 1 with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in key stages 1 and 2 and held discussions with pupils from across the school.
- A meeting was held with representatives of the local authority and the archdiocese.
- Inspectors also met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body, various leaders, including for English and mathematics, the early years and the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- There were also several meetings with the headteacher about pupils' learning and progress and how they and the quality of teaching are assessed and monitored.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including: records of pupils' attendance and behaviour, the school's checks on teaching and its review of its own performance, improvement plans, safeguarding documents and information about pupils' progress.
- Inspectors also met with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the 66 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents (Parent View).

Inspection team

Doris Bell, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Gill	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Tonge	Ofsted Inspector

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