Inspection of a good school: Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School

Hedgefield Road, Belle Vale, Liverpool, Merseyside L25 2RW

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024

Outcome

Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Our Lady's is a haven for pupils. Everyone is welcome and included at this school. As a result, pupils feel very well cared for by staff who know them well. The school has high expectations for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Typically, pupils leave Year 6 ready for the next stage in their education.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and like to learn new ideas. They persevere when they face challenges. There are high levels of mutual respect between pupils and staff. As a result, pupils are keen to do well and impress their teachers.

Breaktimes are harmonious, and pupils play happily with their friends. Pupils, including children in the early years, are sensible and polite. They know the school rules and keep to them. The atmosphere in the school is calm and purposeful.

Pupils are keen to come to school each morning. They are proud to be part of their school community and they recommend it to their friends. Pupils benefit from the many wider opportunities that the school provides. For example, they develop their skills and talents by attending a wide range of extra-curricular clubs such as gymnastics, times tables and book club.

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

The school provides an ambitious curriculum. In most subjects, the curriculum identifies the important knowledge that pupils should learn. Teachers' secure subject knowledge enables them to choose activities that help pupils to know and remember more. In addition, they regularly check on how well pupils are learning. Teachers use this information well to reshape their teaching. For example, they provide additional opportunities for pupils to revisit prior learning when necessary. Over time, pupils leave Year 6 well prepared for their secondary schools. However, this was not the case in 2023.

This was a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils did not have enough time to catch up on lost learning. Most pupils currently at the school are progressing well through the curriculum and learning all that they should.

In a small number of subjects, the curriculum does not identify the key knowledge that should be taught. This means that teachers do not have the information they need to make sure that pupils learn what they should. This hinders some pupils from developing their knowledge over time so that they can connect new learning.

The school has placed a high priority on early reading. This starts in the Nursery class with rhymes, songs and stories. The phonics programme starts swiftly in the Reception class. Well-trained staff deliver the phonics programme effectively. The school works closely with parents and carers so that they understand how to help their children practise reading at home. Pupils who struggle to keep up with the phonics programme are given the support that they need to catch up. However, at times, the books that pupils read do not match the sounds that they know. This means that a minority of pupils are not able to experience success when reading. Older pupils are confident, fluent readers. They talked with enthusiasm about the books that they enjoy reading and their favourite authors.

Pupils, including those in the early years, are kind and considerate to one another. In the Nursery class, children who are new to school are helped to settle in quickly. In lessons, pupils of all ages are ready to learn. They listen attentively to their teachers and are keen to answer questions.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND quickly. These pupils benefit from the effective support that is offered by staff. This helps pupils to learn successfully alongside their classmates. As a result, pupils with SEND progress well through the curriculum.

Attendance is a high priority for the school. The school analyses attendance records carefully and is aware of the reasons for pupils' absence. A clear plan is in place to improve pupils' attendance. This has led to a considerable reduction in the proportion of pupils who are absent from school.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. Pupils learn about the differences between people. They are accepting of others and treat them with kindness and empathy. Pupils develop as well-rounded citizens who contribute to society. For example, the school council has attended the Liverpool Schools Parliament. They contributed to a discussion about the importance of good attendance. In addition, pupils are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the local community. This includes members of the choir who have recently performed in the nearby shopping centre to raise money for a children's hospice.

Staff feel valued. They appreciate how leaders consider their workload when bringing about change. Staff have a deep sense of collective responsibility for pupils. They work together to enable pupils to achieve well over time. Staff and pupils are well supported by the governing body. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They support and challenge leaders to help the school improve the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The books that a few pupils read do not match their phonics knowledge. This means that these pupils are not able to experience success. The school should ensure that reading books are carefully matched to the sounds that pupils know.
- In a small number of subjects, the school has not identified the key knowledge that pupils must know. This makes it difficult for staff to design learning that helps pupils build a secure body of knowledge over time. The school should ensure that the curriculum provides sufficient guidance for teachers so that they know what pupils should know and remember.

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	133337
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10314029
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	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Samantha Dunning
Headteacher	Martin Burke
Website	www.ourladyoftheassumption.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- The last section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in February 2018. The next inspection is due in the academic year beginning September 2024.
- The school offers a breakfast club and after-school provision each day.
- The school does not make use of an alternative provider.

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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders. She also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector spoke to representatives of the local authority and the archdiocese.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour as they arrived at school and during lessons and breaktimes. She also spoke with pupils about their views of school life.
- The inspector considered the views of parents. She looked at the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspector considered the views of pupils and staff who responded to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a sample of pupils' work, spoke with teachers and talked with pupils about their learning.
- The inspector also considered the curriculum in other areas. This includes talking with pupils about the work in their books and subject leaders.
- The inspector also observed pupils reading to familiar adults.

Inspection team

Frith Murphy, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector

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