

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Basil's Catholic Primary School

Hough Green Road, Hough Green, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 4SZ

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Inspection dates:

15 and 16 October 2024

## Outcome

St Basil's Catholic Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

The school's values of 'compassion, service, justice, peace and courage' shine through this friendly, inclusive school. Everybody feels welcome, irrespective of any differences. The school is aspirational for pupils' achievement, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils appreciate the way that the adults want them to work hard and achieve well. They respond positively to this challenge. Across many areas of the curriculum, pupils achieve success and flourish.

Pupils behave well around the school and in classrooms. They are unfailingly polite and respectful to each other, staff and visitors. Strong relationships between pupils and staff form the foundation of this culture of mutual respect. In lessons, pupils are attentive and focus on their learning. They are keen to learn and produce high-quality work.

Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. There is plenty for pupils to do and take part in outside of the academic curriculum. Pupils learn to play a range of musical instruments from Year 1 to Year 6. They also take their leadership responsibilities seriously. For example, pupils are immensely honoured to be a house captain or take an active role in supporting their peers at social times.

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

The ambitious curriculum develops pupils' knowledge in logical steps as they move through the school from early years to Year 6. Pupils benefit from well-thought-out learning that prepares them for the next stage of their education. The school has clearly identified across a range of subjects the essential knowledge which they want pupils to know. Relevant training helps teachers to deliver the curriculum effectively. Within

lessons, teachers check on pupils' knowledge of their previous learning. This helps teachers to ensure that pupils' knowledge builds on secure foundations.

Typically, pupils write accurately with correct grammar and letter formation. From time to time, a few pupils do not have enough opportunities to review and edit their work. On occasion, pupils form habits where their letter formation and grammatical choices are not as accurate as they should be. As a result, some pupils' written communication is not as strong as it should be.

The school is quick to identify pupils' additional needs. It sets relevant and achievable academic targets for pupils with SEND. The school arranges additional teaching to ensure that these pupils receive the right support at the right time. As a result, pupils with SEND have the support or adaptations they need to get the very best out of their learning experiences.

Pupils in the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision) make rapid gains in their learning from their individual starting points. They settle into school well and form excellent relationships with staff.

Reading is a high priority. Pupils enjoy reading. They love recommending books for each other during the 'book lunch' club. Pupils read a wide range of literature and enjoy class texts that are chosen to support various curriculum themes. No time is wasted in ensuring that pupils begin to learn to read well. In the early years, staff share stories and nursery rhymes with children to develop their language and communication skills. This continues as the children move into Year 1.

Staff deliver the phonics programme well. Typically, pupils meet the phonics screening check. That said, a few pupils still concentrate too much on understanding the sounds that different letters make. This means that they sometimes lose fluency when reading. It occasionally affects how well they understand different texts.

The provision for pupils' wider development is a strength. The school is focused on ensuring that pupils experience a wide variety of inspiring activities. It selects these activities carefully to complement pupils' life experiences. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum supports pupils from the early years to Year 6 to develop an age-appropriate understanding of different relationships. Pupils show tremendous empathy and compassion for people who are less fortunate than themselves. They take part in different activities to raise money for charity to help where they can.

In the early years, children quickly settle into routines and expectations. This continues as pupils move through the school. Their conduct is praiseworthy. The school is rigorous in its approach in making sure pupils come to school as often as they can. It has clear strategies in place to support pupils' attendance. The school works effectively with parents and carers to ensure regular attendance. As a result, many pupils attend regularly.

Since the previous inspection, the school has taken decisive action to maintain high standards of education. These decisions have been effective. For example, it has clarified the design of many curriculum subjects and has invested in carefully selected training opportunities for staff.

The governing body supports and challenges the school in equal measure. They keep a close eye on pupils' performance throughout the curriculum. The school supports staff's workload effectively. They value that the school listens to their opinions when they suggest improvements. Staff appreciate particularly the curriculum documentation as this cuts down on unnecessary tasks.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority?)**

- Occasionally, pupils do not have sufficient time to review and edit their work. As a result, some pupils' written communication is not as strong as it should be. The school should ensure that staff provide these pupils sufficient opportunities to review their written work and improve their overall written communication.
- A small group of pupils do not have a secure grasp of their phonics knowledge. This means that these pupils find it hard to read fluently. From time-to-time, this limits their understanding of what they have read. The school should make sure that pupils have the support they need to help them to develop into fluent, confident readers.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in 11 and 12 September 2019.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111390
<b>Local authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10348074
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	246
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	James Duffy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Sheppard
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stbasilsprimary.halton.sch.uk">www.stbasilsprimary.halton.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	11 and 12 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school has a specially resourced provision for up to 12 pupils with complex learning needs. There are currently 12 pupils who attend the provision.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.
- This Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection took place on 9 May 2018. The next section 48 inspection is due this academic year.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector visited lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. He also listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. He met with school leaders to discuss pupils' rates of attendance.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes and as pupils moved around the school building. He scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at the school. He spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and for pupils.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

### **Inspection team**

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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