

St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School

Rossall Grove, Little Sutton, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH66 1NN

Inspection dates

6–7 June 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teachers, leaders and subject leaders do not know how well different groups of pupils progress, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. This restricts their ability to plan work and improvements.
- Leaders' lack of communication about the progress that their children are making towards their targets is a cause for concern for some parents.
- Leaders do not always measure the impact of actions they take as part of shared whole-school development.
- Systems ensuring that staff, including teachers, are held to account are not sufficiently rigorous.
- The quality and impact of teaching are variable. Some teachers do not give pupils, especially the most able, enough chance to excel.
- Evidence in some topic books shows a lack of opportunity for pupils to deepen their writing and mathematical skills.
- Some teachers do not apply the school's policy on feedback to help pupils improve their work.
- Pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures is weak and needs further development.
- The school does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to enrich their learning, for example by taking part in after-school clubs.

The school has the following strengths.

- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel happy and safe. They look after each other.
- Leaders actively promote the spiritual development of pupils and there are strong links with the school parish.
- Pupils are courteous and polite. Attendance is above average and punctuality is good.
- Good-quality teaching in the early years ensures that children have a successful start to their education.
- The systematic and effective teaching of phonics ensures that pupils achieve well in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - senior leaders regularly review the impact of their actions so that the whole school is focused on the key priorities
 - new leaders develop action plans that contain key priorities based on accurate self-evaluation and show clearly the intended impact of the actions taken on pupil progress and other key aspects of the school's work
 - the impact of actions resulting from regular, formal senior leadership meetings is shared with governors and staff
 - teachers are held accountable for the progress that pupils make through a formal process of performance management
 - leaders are held accountable for the rate of school improvement
 - leaders' communication and engagement with parents improve so that parents clearly understand the progress that their children are making from their starting points towards their attainment targets
 - in the headteacher's absence, the deputy headteacher is fully conversant with leadership matters, including tracking of pupils' progress towards targets.
- Increase pupils' progress and raise standards in mathematics by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills, using a range of different strategies to reach solutions.
- Further develop the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - planning offers opportunities for the most able pupils to be challenged and achieve higher standards across the curriculum
 - teachers use assessments of what all groups of pupils can do, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, so that their progress towards learning targets is tracked and shared with parents
 - pupils are given clear guidance, in line with the school's feedback policy, about how they can improve their work
 - teachers in Year 1 and lower key stage 2 regularly check on pupils' learning during lessons and confidently adapt their teaching in direct response to pupils' understanding
 - teachers further develop pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain.
- Extend and improve the opportunities that pupils have to benefit from curriculum enrichment.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders are not able to confidently and accurately discuss the current progress information for groups of pupils. Predictions made by class teachers appear to confirm that the school is moving in the right direction after two years of disappointing results. However, these predictions are not based accurately on pupils' starting points and their progress towards individual targets.
- The areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection still remain priorities. When teachers apply the school's policy for feedback consistently, pupils' progress is improving faster than in classes where this is not the case. Scrutiny of books shows that pupils who understand their individual learning targets also make more rapid progress.
- Pupils' books show that English and mathematical skills are not developed consistently across the wider curriculum. Progress in topic books is not adequately monitored or evaluated.
- The information shared by the headteacher about the achievement of all pupils and groups of pupils does not provide enough context for governors to be able to challenge leaders effectively. Subject leaders' reports do not show the impact of their actions on pupils' progress.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. This is reflected in the general good conduct of pupils and their relationships with each other and adults. Pupils learn about the importance of prayer and live by their school motto, 'Love Jesus, love learning, love life'.
- Leaders have developed strong links with a school in Spain, so that the older pupils are able to enjoy exchange visits once a year. However, pupils' knowledge of other cultures and religions, such as Judaism, Islam or Hinduism, is not as well developed. Pupils are not able to talk about them with any confidence.
- The curriculum has been developed so that it addresses the new and more demanding national curriculum. The curriculum overview provides useful information about the areas of learning that the pupils will explore.
- The targets set by leaders to improve their performance are linked to accurately identified school priorities. However, leaders do not yet hold teachers to account for pupils' progress as part of the performance management process. Insufficient use is made of pupil progress as an indication of the effectiveness of school improvement.
- Leaders have ensured that staff training is regular and useful. They match training to the areas identified for improvement. Staff reported that they feel well supported and are eager to continue to improve their practice. Staff feel that the headteacher cares about their well-being.

- The pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is being used effectively. Information on the current progress being made by this group of pupils shows that the difference between them and others nationally with similar starting points is diminishing.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the sport premium funding is used to improve the teaching of physical education in the school. However, funding has not been used to support after-school clubs and sports. Therefore, all pupils, including the disadvantaged, lack the opportunities to take part in a wide range of sports and after-school clubs.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has changed recently. The new leader is embracing her role with enthusiasm and professionalism as she audits the current progress being made by this group of pupils from their starting points. The coordinator's action plan focuses on early help and interventions in key stage 1, to ensure that pupils are able to do the best they can in their journey through the school. The impact of interventions is being measured half termly.
- Many parents are very happy with the leadership of the school. However, there are some who feel that they are not adequately informed about the progress their children are making, particularly in lower key stage 2. They have requested more regular and detailed reporting on the progress that their children make towards individual targets.
- The local authority continues to provide light-touch support, as does the archdiocese.

Governance of the school

- Governors have reconstituted since the last inspection. The chair of governors provides strong leadership for this group of dedicated people. Governors are aware of their roles and responsibilities and take their duties seriously. Governance is effective.
- Minutes of meetings show that governors keep a close check on spending, including additional moneys for particular groups or different aspects of the school's work.
- Governors give due consideration to the headteacher's recommendations on the pay and performance of other staff.
- Governors show an unmistakable commitment to improving the school's performance. They understand what the areas for improvement are and realise that outcomes for pupils at the school have been disappointing for the past two years, particularly at key stage 2.
- The headteacher provides governors with information on pupils' progress. Governors' minutes show that a more detailed breakdown of the progress of groups of learners towards targets is needed, so they are able to challenge leaders more effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- The governing body is diligent in its responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. It ensures that the right procedures are used when new staff are appointed and that the necessary checks are made on all who come into contact with the pupils.
- Staff also ensure that pupils are kept safe. They have a good awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about pupils' welfare.
- The school site is secure and the identity of visitors is closely checked. Leaders work closely with parents and pupils to ensure that everyone understands what the school does to ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for. Administrative staff are dedicated to making sure that records are complete and that the files on pupils, staff and governors are kept secure and up to date.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Leaders have developed new assessment systems in order to gain a clearer picture of pupils' progress from their starting points to individual targets and outcomes. However, thorough and detailed analysis of pupils' progress, particularly for groups of learners, is still not routine and is not adequately shared with all adults and leaders.
- Teachers understand the importance of setting work at the right level for all pupils, but they do not always do so, especially when it comes to the most able pupils. These, and occasionally other pupils, sometimes have to complete work that is relatively easy and does not add to their existing understanding or deepen their thinking. This is particularly true of lessons observed in Year 1 and lower key stage 2.
- The quality of teachers' questioning is variable. Sometimes teachers use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding and to decide whether to move on or recap. At other times, questioning does not help to deepen, challenge or extend pupils' learning, and progress slows.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning, particularly for the least able and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They break down questions for these pupils so that they can understand them and take a full and active part in lessons. Teaching assistants often work with individuals and groups of pupils in the afternoons or before the start of the school day.
- Some teachers ensure that opportunities for writing and mathematics are built into pupils' work in different subjects. However, topic books show that this is not yet happening consistently in all year groups.
- The teaching of reading is improving, particularly at key stage 2 for disadvantaged and middle-ability pupils. The key stage 2 pupils listened to by inspectors made good use of inference and were able to find answers to questions within the text.
- Teachers in Year 1 and lower key stage 2 do not regularly check on pupils' learning during lessons. This means that they do not fully understand which pupils understand their work and which do not. Consequently, these teachers do not confidently adapt their teaching in direct response to pupils' understanding.

- Not all teachers judge the progress that pupils are making against their potential and their prior attainment. As a result, they are not able to make meaningful judgements about pupils' rates of progress.
- Homework is not always regularly marked and pupils do not always receive sufficient feedback on their work to enable them to improve it.
- Leaders told us that pupils' progress meetings take place once a term with the class teacher. Here, teachers share ideas and talk about the progress that pupils are making. However, teachers are not held to account for the progress that pupils make as part of the performance management process.
- Phonics is taught well. Pupils acquire good understanding of the fundamentals of reading as they learn the relationship between letters and sounds. Comprehension skills are weaker but they are improving because teachers focus on ensuring that pupils understand what they have read in sessions, which are now well organised.
- Pupils benefit from strong relationships between staff, pupils and parents.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Parents agreed that their children are cared for well. They praised the staff for being approachable, for listening and for helping them and their children.
- Pupils feel entirely safe in school. They reported that bullying is extremely rare because it is not tolerated at any level. Pupils learn to resolve conflict themselves and know that there is always an adult to turn to if they feel unhappy about anything.
- Leaders ensure that staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe and how to use the internet responsibly. Pupils know why it is important to keep themselves healthy, for example by eating healthily and being physically active.
- Pupils value the opportunities to take up positions of responsibility. Through the school council, they contribute to the running of the school. They begin to understand democracy, as they elect the councillors and expect them to represent their views. The democratic process was clearly demonstrated when three pupils from upper key stage 2 read their election manifestos to years 4 and 5. The candidates responded well to some very tricky questions before pupils elected their junior member of the school parliament.
- Pupils' personal development is not nurtured to the full. In some lessons, pupils are not given enough opportunities to work things out for themselves to extend their learning. Occasionally, pupils sit waiting for a member of staff to tell them what to do next.
- Pupils are polite and friendly and they are willing to help others, including visitors. They work together well in lessons and make a strong contribution to the community, especially through the church. They collect money for a range of different charities and know that it is important to help others.

- Class teachers keep a log of any concerns that they have about pupils, and the new special educational needs coordinator follows everything up rigorously.
- Pupils enjoy school trips that link into the wider curriculum. These provide the all-important stimulus for improved writing and better understanding of the world around them. Detailed risk assessments ensure that pupils' safety is paramount. By comparison, opportunities to promote pupils' personal development through regular and frequent activities, perhaps through after-school clubs are not maximised.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and they work hard. They want to succeed and some talk of their ambition to go to university. Some pupils' attitudes to learning are not yet consistently good. This is because of the varying quality of teaching and the less effective relationships that a minority of teachers have with their class.
- Pupils' conduct in the corridors and in the dining hall is orderly and responsible. Pupils play happily together at playtimes. They are considerate towards each other. This is particularly obvious when children from Reception share the playground with older pupils. Pupils from higher up the school are quick to spot the high-visibility vests and make sure that the younger ones always have someone to play with.
- Attendance is consistently in line with the national average. This is the result of the school's determined efforts and its work with parents. Members of staff, including the headteacher, meet and greet pupils and parents.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are rare. Consistent positive application of the school behaviour policy and the use of behaviour ladders and team points in class ensure that pupils respect the boundaries that are set. They understand that they have to earn 'Golden Time' for an hour every Friday.
- The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, reported that behaviour is good in the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils who are not yet at a good level of development when they leave the early years are on track to achieve the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1. The proportion of pupils' attaining greater depth in their understanding by the end of key stage 1 is also increasing.
- The improved progress seen in some writing and mathematics work is not routinely replicated in other subject areas.
- Teachers in lower key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 do not consistently match work to the pupils' ability or prior attainment. In some of the lessons seen during this inspection, pupils were clearly finding the work too easy, for example, in Year 4, when looking at the properties of two-dimensional shapes. In Year 1, pupils were asked to find the common elements in the 2, 5 and ten times tables. Half of this

class completed the colouring-in task in minutes leaving others struggling to understand the difference between mathematical signs \times and $+$.

- Work in books from the last academic year shows that not all teachers share the same high expectations in terms of volume of work and presentation. This is still the case. Although, to a large extent, the presentation of pupils' work remains of a high quality, this is not yet consistent across all subjects.
- In 2016, the number of key stage 2 pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with national figures. However, only a third of the disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standard. The school's monitoring indicates that disadvantaged pupils are likely to do better this year.
- Progress was very disappointing at the end of key stage 2 last year in reading and slightly disappointing in mathematics. Leaders now feel that they have adjusted to the higher expectations of the end-of-year assessments and are planning accordingly, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Attainment predictions provided by leaders indicate improvements in reading, with 86% of pupils in line to achieve the expected standard and 18% at greater depth. Mathematics predictions are in line with those for writing.
- Good teaching of phonics has ensured that the small numbers of disadvantaged pupils are now doing as well as others nationally. The differences between boys and girls have also diminished.

Early years provision

Good

- The majority of children enter the Reception class with skills that are at least those expected for their age. Children from all groups, including the small numbers of disadvantaged children or those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points. This is because of the quality of care and teaching they receive. As a result, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has remained consistently above the national average for the past three years and continues to improve. Children are very well prepared for Year 1.
- The teacher responsible for early years provides strong leadership. She has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and plans appropriate improvements. These include creating more opportunities for children to accelerate their development further. Detailed information on children's progress towards the early learning goals shows that increasing numbers are already on track to achieve this.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is good. This is because teachers and teaching assistants know the children well and have a good knowledge of how young children learn best. They ensure that assessments are accurate and that their planning reflects the needs of the children from their different starting points.
- The indoor and outdoor provision is well resourced, providing children with numerous opportunities for reading, writing and number work. During the session observed by inspectors, all children were actively engaged. One group of girls was creating a game, writing names and putting them in a box for a prize draw. A boy was creating

a giant's seat out of cubes and was able to tell the teacher what the qualities of a cube were, referring to the number of 'faces'.

- Staff in the early years have established good partnerships with parents. Consequently, parents are well informed about children's progress and are confident that staff will act quickly to deal with any concerns.
- Children were using equipment with confidence and were eager to chat with inspectors about what they were doing.
- Teachers are quick to identify children who need additional support and seek support from other professionals to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable children are met. Staff use questioning skills effectively to challenge and encourage children.
- Adults consistently demonstrate respect and courtesy to children, who copy this with enthusiasm. Children play well together and effectively develop their inquisitiveness and social skills to become eager learners because of adults' encouragement.
- Children are kept safe because staff are well trained and vigilant. Leaders ensure that all welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	111357
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10024410

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Winterburn
Headteacher	Mr R Hughes
Telephone number	01513 382430
Website	www.stmaryoftheangels.co.uk
Email address	head@stmaryoftheangels.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small group of pupils are from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- There are no children looked after and two pupils have education, health and care plans.
- A breakfast club, an after-school club and wrap-around care are provided on site by a private provider. This provision is subject to a separate inspection.
- There is a stable staff team at this school and there have been few staff changes in recent years.

- The proportion of pupils who receive support because they have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is lower than the national average.
- The school met the floor standard in 2016. This school did not meet the coasting threshold in 2015 and 2016 and is therefore in danger of being eligible for intervention.
- Senior leaders have recently reallocated and reviewed many of the subject leaders' roles and responsibilities, including that of the special needs coordinator.

Information about this inspection

- The headteacher was not on site during the inspection. The lead inspector had a short telephone conversation with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed learning in all classes and phases of the school. Some of the observations were conducted jointly with the deputy headteacher of the school.
- Inspectors met with the deputy headteacher, senior and subject leaders, the chair of governors and other governors, and spoke to the diocese and local authority representatives.
- Pupils were formally interviewed, and inspectors spoke to many pupils informally during lessons and at play or lunchtime. Inspectors listened to two groups of pupils read and the lead inspector listened to some pupils read during their lessons.
- Inspectors undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work in English, mathematics and other subjects. Work from the majority of classes from the current academic year was seen.
- The inspectors viewed a wide range of school documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, reports from external advisers to the school, school policies and assessment information about pupils' achievement. Anonymised performance management documents and safeguarding reviews were also viewed. Attendance and behaviour records were scrutinised.
- Inspectors took into account 36 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and a formal letter of complaint from a parent. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. Views of 13 staff and 31 pupils were also considered.

Inspection team

Maggie Parker, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tina Cleugh	Ofsted Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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