

Inspection of St Clare's Catholic Primary School

Garmoyle Close, Liverpool, Merseyside L15 0DW

Inspection dates: 15–16 January 2020

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Requires improvement |

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy. They find that the school is a calm, restful and protected place in which they can learn, make friends and succeed. A typical pupil comment was: 'At the very time that you're going through difficulty, everyone in the school has your back.'

Leaders and staff make teaching pupils to read a main priority of daily life at the school. Many pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils learn well in other subjects, especially computing. Many pupils take part in extra activities, such as learning to sing and cook, and participating in sport. Parents and carers praised the work of the school. For instance, one parent said: 'Staff encourage and enhance pupils' creative, sporting and artistic gifts and abilities.'

Pupils said that their frequent special trips and events help them to know and remember essential information.

Bullying is rare. Pupils told us that staff deal with issues well. Throughout the school, pupils behave sensibly. They listen and work hard in lessons. They are extremely polite, as shown when they thanked us for our time in meeting with them.

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

Staff successfully help pupils to overcome many of the challenges that happen in their lives. Pupils learn well in different subjects in key stages 1 and 2. Pupils enjoy their learning. Their positive behaviour helps lessons to be calm and enjoyable. Published information shows that pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is improving and was average in 2019.

We found that staff mostly plan pupils' learning properly. Leaders and staff have successfully adapted much of their previous curriculum, including in mathematics, to help pupils to build their knowledge in a logical order. Most of the work that pupils complete, including that of pupils with SEND, matches the school's good-quality curriculum, including in physical education. Pupils start to learn about computing in the early years at St Clare's. Pupils' strong knowledge of computing is built on in each class. This means that pupils are ready for secondary school and for their future careers. Even so, in geography and science, staff do not plan some units of learning in enough detail to show which knowledge pupils will develop. Subject leaders are already acting to resolve these issues.

Leaders put reading at the heart of the school curriculum. Staff in the nursery skilfully read high-quality stories, rhymes and poems to children. They use well-chosen information books to teach children about the world. They enthuse children about language and reading. This work continues well throughout the school. Parents agreed. For instance, one parent said: 'My son loves to read and was

particularly inspired by a visit to school by an author. He went on to read all of the author's books.' Pupils read confidently and with understanding. Staff support pupils who speak English as an additional language very well to read. Many pupils practise their reading each day, such as at breakfast club, lunchtime club and in lessons. Older pupils are trying to read the 100 books that teachers have challenged them to read before they leave the school. They talked to us about the work of different authors and poets, such as Michael Rosen and Benjamin Zephaniah. However, we did find that staff do not always match reading books precisely to pupils' knowledge of letter sounds.

Pupils are inspired to aim high about their possible careers. They meet people such as doctors and architects at the school. Pupils know that their strong skills in designing and writing computer programs are important for their future. They are learning to become responsible British citizens. As one pupil said, 'This is a school that respects everyone.'

Leaders know the work of the school in detail, including the curriculum. They give staff access to much training for their roles in leading different subjects. They make certain that staff's workload is manageable. Staff put pupils' work in attractive displays on the walls of classrooms and corridors. Teachers use these displays well in the curriculum. Parents praise the work of the headteacher. For example, one parent that 'the school has come on in leaps and bounds' since the headteacher joined.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff consider carefully how to protect each pupil from harm. They make proper links with other agencies and voluntary groups to ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils told us that they can speak to any member of staff about their worries. They also know that they can telephone national helplines. Pupils understand the risks of meeting strangers online. They know how to protect their personal information when using the internet. Older pupils understand the dangers of knife crime and gangs. Many pupils told inspectors that the school is a safe, reassuring place in which to learn.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- From nursery to Year 6, leaders and staff take many steps to celebrate the love of reading and books with pupils and to teach pupils to read. Yet, some of the books that staff select for pupils to practise their reading have words and sounds that pupils do not know. When pupils take these books home, this mismatch risks causing pupils to stumble rather than succeed. Leaders need to make certain that pupils practise reading at a level that precisely matches their phonics knowledge. This will mean that pupils experience even greater success as readers.

- Leaders and staff have revised the school curriculum across subjects in many worthwhile ways. This is helping pupils to know and remember valuable information. Even so, staff do not plan some units of the geography and science curriculums as well as others. This means that pupils do not learn some of the knowledge set out in the national curriculum as well as they should. Leaders should make certain that teachers plan the curriculum in enough detail to teach pupils all the knowledge that they need to remember.
- The transition arrangements were used in this inspection to confirm that pupils benefit from a good quality of education.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 104648 |
| Local authority | Liverpool |
| Inspection number | 10121932 |
| 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 | 212 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Aidan Prescott |
| Headteacher | Kate Peaston |
| Website | www.mystclares.com |
| Date of previous inspection | 21–22 November 2017 |

Information about this school

- Some staff are new to the school since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as additional language has risen significantly in recent years. Current pupils at the school speak at least one of 32 languages.
- Many pupils join or leave the school at different times of the year.
- The nursery is open for morning sessions only.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection of religious education took place in May 2019.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. One inspector met separately with a group of parents. We reviewed the 17 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey, including nine free-text responses.

- We met with several groups of pupils, including six pupils from key stage 2, to talk about the school's support for their personal development.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and geography. We spoke with subject leaders, visited some lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and reviewed examples of pupils' work. I listened to some pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 reading to their teachers.
- We considered information about the school's curriculum in computing and physical education, spoke with pupils and met with leaders of these subjects.
- We considered information in case studies about several pupils, shared by leaders.
- We spoke with pupils, parents, leaders and staff about the school's work to protect pupils from harm. We checked examples of leaders' records about the safeguarding of pupils. We reviewed the school's checks of staff suitability to work with pupils.
- We spoke with staff who support pupils at lunchtimes. We met with a play therapist who helps pupils at the school. One inspector met with the school's leaders for behaviour and for SEND.
- I met with the school's adviser from Liverpool local authority and spoke by telephone with a representative of the local authority minority ethnic and Traveller achievement service. I spoke by telephone with a representative of the archdiocese.
- I met with five governors, including the vice-chair.
- There were no responses to consider from Ofsted's surveys of staff or pupils.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tracy Webb

Ofsted Inspector

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