

Parish CofE Primary School

Charles Street, St Helens, Merseyside WA10 1LW

Inspection dates 19–20 January 2016

Overall effectiveness **Outstanding**

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Pupils, staff and parents are rightly proud of being part of Parish. As one parent says ‘to be at our school makes us smile with pride’.
- The exceptional headteacher is passionate about providing the highest standards to ensure her pupils achieve academically and are well-rounded individuals.
- The talented senior leadership team have high expectations and are excellent role models for the whole school community.
- Governors are committed and play an active part in monitoring and evaluating the school, resulting in a keen focus on improvement.
- From their starting points, outcomes for pupils throughout all key stages are outstanding.
- The school has every child’s success at the heart of all it does. Its ethos impacts greatly on pupils and helps them to develop into very caring individuals.
- The quality of teaching and learning is of a very high standard throughout the school. All staff share the heartfelt belief that pupils deserve the very best.
- The teaching of writing is outstanding throughout the school, resulting in the quality of pupils’ written work being exemplary.
- Pupils develop outstanding personal, social and emotional skills partly because these are woven into the curriculum.
- Pupils’ conduct around school is impeccable; they are polite and well-mannered.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. It is promoted by everyone in school, resulting in pupils that are highly tolerant and respectful of others.
- Teaching in early years is outstanding. The passion of staff to support children’s learning is clearly evident. The classroom is a stimulating environment in which children learn exceptionally well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to build on the improvements to develop reading across school, so that:
 - by the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils are making the same consistently excellent progress that they make in writing
 - the most-able pupils are provided with opportunities to develop their reading skills even further, so that they can excel.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has ensured that the school offers excellent opportunities for all pupils to achieve and develop into well-rounded individuals.
- The senior leaders are excellent role models of high expectations, who, alongside the headteacher, lead the learning and passionately set the tone in this thriving and deeply caring school.
- The school's ethos is powerful: every child's success is at the heart of all it does. The culture is focused on developing caring, considerate pupils of all ages who are highly respectful and tolerant of each other and the wider community.
- Not only pupils, but staff, adults and governors are uplifted by being members of the school. Staff are clearly passionate about pupils' learning. One parent said 'you are proud when your child comes to this school, it makes you smile' and governors describe a sense of feeling 'energised and a better person for having visited'.
- Senior leaders know their school extremely well and are continually looking for ways to ensure that the learning and curriculum that they offer pupils is of the highest quality. The school's evaluation of its own work is accurate and its analysis is thorough and detailed. The school's self-evaluation is presented in a format that is succinct and transparent, making it accessible to staff, governors and, if needed, external colleagues. Priorities are clear and swiftly acted upon. In reading, for example, rapid actions are already visibly impacting on teaching and on pupils' learning.
- Middle leaders play a central role in improving the school and are empowered to do so. They approach the curriculum and learning with the same flair and exemplary standards as other leaders and, as a result, they have a very positive impact on learning. For example, to support pupils in explaining their learning and increase the range of ways that they can solve problems, middle leaders developed a new approach called 'mathematical mutterings', which has proven popular with pupils and is noticeably increasing their confidence in mathematics.
- Staff morale is very positive and focused on a commitment to all pupils. The level of professional dialogue is high; staff are keen to research ideas about teaching, discuss them in depth and then develop a 'Parish' version. In this way, the strategies that the school puts in place are refined to meet the needs of its pupils and, as a result, pupils make good and outstanding progress. Often these refinements improve the original and are acknowledged by external bodies as exemplary. For example, as a response to some pupils expressing concerns about money management, staff enhanced a children's financial awareness programme.
- Performance management is effective and is closely linked to the school's priorities and outcomes for pupils. There is an excellent range of training and professional development offered to staff. New teachers are nurtured and supported to reach the same high standards as the rest of the team. This ensures a consistency of learning quality for pupils across the whole school.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively. Pupils are known well by leaders and teachers. Provision for disadvantaged pupils is monitored and tracked meticulously, with clear plans to provide academic or other support where necessary. Any barriers to learning are quickly removed and pupils make strong progress.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sports funding is also used well. There are opportunities for pupils to be involved in a wide range of sports, delivered by teachers and sports coaches both within the school day and after school. Funding has also been targeted, where needed, towards pupils who would otherwise not be able to participate in more unusual activities such as judo, fencing or rock climbing. As a result, pupils delight in taking part in a wide range of sporting opportunities. The funding has also enhanced teachers' own skills in delivering good quality sport and PE lessons.
- The curriculum is exciting, meets pupils' interests and, as a result, contributes enormously to their enjoyment of lessons. Subjects are well planned and have plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils are excited to tell adults about what they are learning, whether this is about the Titanic in Year 5 or space travel and astronauts in Reception class. Themed days and weeks contribute to offering pupils a broad range of experiences as do the wide range of trips and visitors to school that promote pupils' aspirations.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. In class, around school and even outside of school, it is promoted and modelled by staff and pupils. Pupils appreciate diversity and respect the views and opinions of others. There is an understanding of different cultures and religions and a genuine

tolerance and respect of others that equips pupils very well for life in modern Britain.

- The school offers a before- and after-school club, which is well run and managed. It is a popular provision, appreciated by parents and enjoyed by pupils. Pupils who attend take part in a range of activities, which they often have the opportunity to plan themselves. The club gives pupils a positive start and end to the school day.
- Parents are extremely positive about the school and talk about the pride they feel because their child attends Parish. All of the parents that responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, felt happy to recommend the school to others and the vast majority agreed that all aspects of school are strong. Parents feel listened to and that communication is clear and supportive.
- The local authority appropriately considers that the school only needs 'light touch' support and in fact uses its school leadership and teaching expertise to support other schools in the area. The school's improvement partner provides the school with high-quality external evaluation.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governing body meetings are well attended by a committed team of governors who have improved their knowledge, skills and practice significantly since the last inspection. They often meet with senior and middle leaders to discuss the actions and improvements in areas for which they are responsible and each governor is assigned to a class. Governors are focused on improving the school and play an active part in monitoring and evaluating its performance, resulting in them making an important contribution to the school's drive for continual improvement.
 - Governors have a good level of understanding about the progress that pupils are making and need to make. They recognise the need to continue to focus on improving outcomes for Key Stage 2 pupils in reading, and to this end they are confident in challenging the leaders of the school.
 - Governors have a good understanding of performance management procedures and, together with the headteacher, have ensured that staff deployment meets the needs of pupils. As well as holding teachers and leaders to account, they ensure that the management of teachers' pay is effective. They check to ensure that the pupil premium and the PE and sports grants are spent effectively and have impact.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is an extremely thorough system in place to check on the qualifications of staff and their suitability to work with children. Staff undertake regular, appropriate training, and as a result fully understand procedures and their responsibilities. Safeguarding is given a very high priority in school and is meticulously managed. The following up of incidents or concerns is exemplary and, where needed, a persistent approach is taken in the cases where the school is concerned for a pupil's welfare. Timely and effective relationships with other agencies ensure that pupils are kept safe and that their welfare needs are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- The quality of teaching and learning is of a very high standard. Pupils really enjoy school and are enthusiastic about their learning. Almost every pupil who answered Ofsted's survey, and those who spoke to inspectors, agreed that teachers make sure that everyone understands their work, listens to what they say and helps them to do their best. Teachers are extremely enthusiastic about pupils and their learning and ensure that most lessons are interesting, lively and fun. For example, pupils in one class were thrilled when they thought that a 'dinosaur' had visited in the night and left some eggs in a nest in the school for them to look after.
- Teachers know their pupils well and use excellent assessment information effectively to identify and plan for pupils' needs over time and in lessons. A straightforward approach to planning lessons ensures that pupils are very clear about what they need to learn and how they can improve. Time is never wasted in class and spare moments are filled with spontaneous learning opportunities.
- There is a high level of consistency of approach across the school, including the learning environment, handwriting, presentation of work, and the quality of resources. The new developments, introduced to support pupils have a deeper understanding of what they read and to help pupils develop ways to solve problems in mathematics, are thoroughly established. The provision for writing is outstanding throughout the school, with high expectations and exemplary work from Reception to Year 6.
- High expectations are appropriately reinforced through the school, with appropriate challenge for pupils of all abilities, including the most able. The dip last year in the proportion of the most-able pupils achieving highly in reading has been responded to rigorously and a high level of challenge in the teaching

of higher-ability reading is now evident. Pupils respond to this extremely well, saying that they feel 'lessons are sometimes hard but this helps us to learn and prepare for life'.

- The subject knowledge of teachers, and often teaching assistants, is excellent, as is their ability to skilfully ask the right questions to help pupils move on in their learning. Mistakes are seen by staff and pupils as just another opportunity to learn.
- Where pupils are struggling with their learning, teachers and school leaders use an effective range of learning opportunities to help them catch up. As a result, pupils make good and better progress.
- The support that teachers provide for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is thorough and of an excellent quality. Support is identified quickly and pupils' needs are addressed well, resulting in them making at least good and often outstanding progress over time.
- Teaching assistants across Key Stages 1 and 2 are deployed effectively and make a good contribution to the progress of the pupils with whom they work.
- The curriculum is well planned. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to develop reading, including phonics (the sounds that letters make), writing and mathematics, as well as master concepts in different subjects. Communication and language are a priority for the school, as many pupils begin their school careers with this as an area of need. However, by the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 1 and then throughout Key Stage 2, they possess an impressive level of vocabulary, can use these words in a variety of situations and are extremely good at expressing their thoughts and understanding. For example, when pupils of all ages were asked if they could describe their school, they used adjectives such as 'flawless', 'joyful', 'fabulous' and 'extraordinary'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding and a strength.
- Pupils develop outstanding personal, social and emotional skills partly because these are woven into the curriculum. Personal development is particularly taught through school values such as hope, forgiveness, trust, compassion and humility. In this way pupils are effectively taught to be thoughtful and caring citizens.
- Adults and pupils promote and model a culture of respect. All staff treat pupils equally and ensure that the school makes everyone feel welcomed and valued.
- The vast majority of pupils throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 are confident learners and are keen to talk about their learning. All expressed how proud they were of their school and their work. This is demonstrated by the high-quality presentation of all pupils' workbooks and the way that they wear their school uniform neatly and with pride.
- Pupils learn how to live healthy lifestyles and look after themselves through a curriculum rich with opportunities to develop well-being. Personal, social and health education is a strong feature across the school and, as a result, pupils are extremely considerate and tolerant toward others.
- There is a huge range of extra-curricular experiences offered to pupils that contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These opportunities change termly and are evaluated to check pupils are enjoying and benefiting from them. These include residential trips, working in the community and first aid, as well as activities such as debating society, dance, cooking, 'young engineers' and the 'bendy bodies' club. The school's leaders are very aware of the continual need to support pupils' aspirations for the future. To this end they have created a 'Parish University', which seeks to promote self-belief in pupils so that they can be whatever they want to be as adults. There is a programme of study, with options to choose from, visiting speakers and an opportunity to graduate. It is an extremely popular club, with over fifty pupils participating.
- Pupils' awareness of their local and wider community is excellent. When a member of the school community bought one of the ceramic poppies displayed in London, it prompted a project on remembrance and resulted in beautiful displays of pupils' own poppy sculptures. Many pupils, in their own time and in school uniform, attend church on the last Sunday in the month.
- The majority of parents who responded to 'Parent View' felt that the school deals appropriately with bullying. They think that the school looks after their children well and, as a result, their children feel safe and happy. A very small percentage of parents disagreed. Pupils spoken to during the inspection were very clear about what bullying was and said that they felt incidents were rare. They were very confident that teachers dealt with any unkind or negative language towards pupils very quickly. Pupils were

unanimous in their view that they felt safe in school and they showed exceptional knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils from Year 2 upwards were able to very clearly say some of the things that you should and should not do online to keep safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' conduct around school is impeccable; pupils are polite and well-mannered. Pupils will often ask adults if they are well and if they are enjoying their day as well as opening doors for them and asking if they can be of help. This all contributes to the school being a very calm, orderly and purposeful place to learn.
- Pupils are very aware of how to behave and the consequences for poor behaviour. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare, dealt with quickly by teachers and responded to by pupils appropriately and with maturity.
- Those pupils who have behavioural needs are well supported to ensure that their behaviour does not get in the way of their learning and does not distract others' learning.
- There have been no permanent exclusions for the last four years.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average. Very few pupils are persistently absent from school and for the small number of pupils that are, there is a clear support plan in place to help with any issues related to difficulties in attending school.
- The systems for monitoring attendance, absence and punctuality are rigorous and effective. Leaders go the extra mile to support pupils and families and have given out alarm clocks, called round to homes and will even phone up home as an alarm call if necessary. Good attendance is rewarded and has a high profile in school. Recently there has been a focus on not being late for school. This has been very popular with pupils as the class reward is a giant soft toy banana called 'Bertie be before the bell banana'.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Overall, outcomes for pupils are outstanding. Pupils' starting points are often below and well below those found nationally.
- For the last three years all Year 6 pupils have made expected progress in writing and the majority have made expected progress in mathematics. A number of these pupils also made more than expected progress. However, in 2015 pupils did not make as much progress compared to previous years in reading. Reading has been identified by the school as a key focus for improvement. The rapid impact of this focus is already very evident in pupils' work and in the tracking information that indicates the rapid progress pupils are making.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. As a result, they all make at least good and often outstanding progress overall by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment is similar to other pupils in school and above similar pupils nationally. This is because the school monitors very effectively the progress of these pupils and ensures that they are supported well in class to improve.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress from their starting points. Teachers and teaching assistants provide very effective support to ensure that pupils have the appropriate resources to help their learning.
- By the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils attaining the standard expected is above that of pupils of a similar age nationally in reading and writing and the majority of pupils of a similar age in mathematics. The most-able pupils attain above similar pupils nationally in writing and comparably in mathematics. However, in 2015 there was a dip in the proportion of the most-able pupils attaining similarly to pupils nationally in reading. Outcomes for the most-able pupils in reading have been swiftly identified and addressed by the school as a key focus for improvement.
- The outcomes for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are very strong. By the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils attaining the level expected in reading, writing and mathematics is at or above pupils of a similar age nationally, as is the attainment for the most-able pupils. This is because the teaching and learning across Key Stage 1 is of a high standard and effectively hastens the learning of pupils from their start at the beginning of Key Stage 1.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the national phonics check in Year 1 is above that of pupils of a similar age nationally. Every opportunity is taken in early years and Key Stage 1 classes

to encourage pupils to use their growing phonics knowledge to sound out words across lessons and curriculum activities.

- Pupils like reading, and talk enthusiastically about how they love to read in class and at home. Pupils who need support read with an adult every day and others read to an adult regularly. Reading has a high profile in school and many opportunities are provided in class to share good quality books, read aloud and hear adults modelling good reading habits. The substantial focus on developing pupils' skills in understanding the meaning of texts has a clear impact on pupils' progress in reading.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- The early years provision is outstanding. Children's outcomes are outstanding because they make rapid progress from their starting points. Around half of the children typically start the early years with skills and knowledge below what is typical for their age, with around one-quarter being significantly low.
- The proportion of children who reached a good level of development at the end of Reception in 2015 was close to that of children nationally. From their individual starting points, the majority of children made at least good progress and a number made outstanding progress.
- Children typically start their school career with weaker communication and listening skills and personal, social and emotional development. However, by time they leave Reception, they have made significant progress in these areas. In class, children are keen to talk and explain their activities and learning. They communicate enthusiastically with adults and each other. In sessions led by adults, the majority of children are confident to respond in sentences rather than by using single words.
- The role of the early years leader is shared between the headteacher and class teacher. Together they provide outstanding leadership. They are very clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and plan the curriculum well to capture children's interests. Assessment and tracking of children's learning is exemplary. From this meticulous information, activities and provision are tightly matched to children's needs. This results in children making rapid progress. For example, an increased focus on provision to interest boys and encourage communication and writing skills has led to boys being more confident to talk to each other and adults, and more enthusiastic about writing.
- Teaching is outstanding. The passion of staff to support children's learning is visible. Classrooms are stimulating environments in which children learn exceptionally well. Areas for learning are attractive and encourage children to want to visit and get involved in the activities on offer. The outdoor provision is small but is well resourced and used. It is full of opportunities for children to develop a range of skills and to develop their imagination. For example, children were having lots of fun building with large boxes to create a rocket to fly to the moon.
- There is a strong emphasis on creating a caring and nurturing environment, which is evident from the very positive relationship adults have with children and children have with each other.
- Leaders value close links with parents. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's learning. A homework task to create a space-inspired model or picture, stimulated not only parents to work with their child at home but also generated lots of excitement and chatter in the classroom. Children were very proud of their work. Here, the relationship with parents is considered to be an essential way to set the tone for a child's whole-school career. Parents talk very positively about Reception class; they are keen to say that their children are very happy to come to school, enjoy learning and that staff are always helpful and supportive.
- Transition arrangements are thorough. with visits made to the home and an excellent relationship with the pre-school provision located within the school where a number of the children transfer from.
- Safeguarding is effective and the classroom is a safe environment for children.

School details

Unique reference number	104793
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10001359

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Harry Wood
Headteacher	Lynne Ryder
Telephone number	01744 678430
Website	www.parish.st-helens.sch.uk
Email address	parish@sthelens.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 December 2010

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is twice the national average. The proportion of those who are disabled or have a special educational needs statement or education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium is twice the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The school meets the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There is a before- and after-school club managed by the school, which formed part of the inspection.
- There is also a pre-school provision managed by the school. However, this is separately registered and therefore did not form part of the inspection.
- The school is a partner in a local teaching school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes and in a range of subjects. Inspectors also visited an assembly and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of social moral, spiritual and cultural development. Inspectors observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and in the learning journals of pupils in the early years.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, safeguarding manager, curriculum leaders, the Reception class teacher and also met with the staff of the before- and after-school club and the pre-school provision.
- An inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A meeting was also held with the school improvement partner and a school improvement representative from the local authority.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with inspectors. Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils in the playground and at lunchtime.
- The inspectors took account of 12 staff questionnaires. There were 18 responses to Ofsted's online parent survey (Parent View) taken into consideration. Two parents met with an inspector and others spoke to inspectors on the playground before school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including minutes from meetings of the governing body, information on pupils' outcomes, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

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