

St Luke's Catholic Primary School

Shaw Lane, Prescot, Merseyside L35 5AT

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2018

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

- Pupils' achievement is patchy across the school, including in science.
- The quality of teaching varies. On occasion, teachers do not support or challenge pupils enough, in different subjects and classes, to make sure that they progress well in their learning, for example, in geography.
- Leaders do not ensure that the less able pupils consistently have the help they need, for instance, to improve their reading.
- Teachers do not give the most able pupils enough challenge, so they attain as highly as they should.
- Some of senior leaders' plans and reviews of the school are imprecise.
- Senior leaders do not check the school's performance in science in enough detail.
- Some staff do not address weaknesses in pupils' spelling and handwriting. Not all staff's writing is an accurate model for pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders' and staff actions are leading to a rise in attainment for current pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, most strongly in key stage 2.
- Pupils in Year 1 learn successfully to recognise the sounds that letters represent.
- Children in the early years have a good start to their education. They become confident, able and inquisitive because of good teaching and skilful leadership.
- Middle leaders are beginning to contribute to the improvement in the quality of teachers' work.
- The school feels calm and happy. Pupils behave positively. They represent their school with pride and know to try hard in activities.
- Leaders and staff provide a broad range of learning which pupils enjoy, including sport.
- Staff and leaders care for and protect pupils well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the recent increases in the proportion of pupils reaching or exceeding the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics continue next year and beyond in key stages 1 and 2.
- Improve the quality of teaching in key stages 1 and 2, by staff:
 - planning tasks matched closely to the different needs of pupils
 - adapting activities when individual pupils need extra guidance
 - giving the most able pupils greater challenge in their learning
 - helping pupils to develop their skills in spelling and the quality of their handwriting
 - giving pupils activities which help them to gain the expected knowledge and skills in geography and science.
- Improve the impact of leaders' work by:
 - sharpening senior leaders' plans for improving the school to show clearly how success will be assured
 - making sure senior leaders' reviews of the school are precise about what remains to be achieved, for example in raising pupils' attainment in science
 - addressing the variability in the quality of teaching, so there is much greater consistency across classes and subjects
 - working with staff, parents and carers to give the less able pupils more assistance to improve their reading skills
 - developing the skills of staff so they demonstrate accurate writing to pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- In the years following the previous inspection, St Luke's did not adapt well to the new expectations for schools set out by the government. The quality of leadership, teaching, pupils' outcomes and the wider work of the school faltered. Staff and leaders have since started to take determined steps to improve their work. The quality of education provided is once again moving in the right direction.
- Leaders make effective use of help from experts outside the school to assist with improvement. The extra guidance provided has been of great assistance, particularly over the past year.
- Senior leaders are rightly pleased with the rising quality of their work and that of staff. For example, pupils' attainment is improving. More pupils are learning well in Year 2 and Year 6 than in the previous two years. However, some senior leaders' self-evaluation is overly generous. Some plans for improving the school lack clarity. In addition, some of their reviews of the school give too little attention to pupils' attainment in science.
- In sharp contrast, middle leaders' plans, for example, in mathematics and English, are much clearer and more purposeful. Overall, middle leaders' new systems to check the work of staff and pupils in different subjects are effective. In some subjects, such as English, middle leaders' work to check pupils' work is improving quickly. Even so, it is too soon to see the full impact of this across some other subjects. For instance, leaders spotted weaknesses in the quality of geography taught in one year group in spring 2018. However, by the time of this inspection, those same pupils' learning in geography remained unchallenging and ill-matched to the school's curriculum plan.
- The coordinator of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is developing an appropriate overview of the work of staff across the school. She is starting to check on pupils' progress more rigorously.
- Leaders consider carefully the issues affecting the learning of disadvantaged pupils. They set appropriate priorities and actions for the use of the pupil premium funding. This is helping disadvantaged pupils to learn more successfully.
- Senior and middle leaders are succeeding in making sure that St Luke's is a calm, happy school, where pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Most parents and carers who shared their views with inspectors were pleased with their children's education. Pupils with whom inspectors spoke talked of their pride in the school. They said they gain much from their activities across the curriculum, including their study of French and art, or acting out stories such as 'Fantastic Mr Fox'. They enjoy trips, such as singing at a public concert in Liverpool or visits to local museums.
- Leaders spend the primary school physical education and sport funding wisely. Pupils commented very positively to inspectors about the wide range of sporting activities available to encourage them to be active.
- Almost all staff support the positive changes being made in the school and the new direction set for their work by leaders.

- Leaders ensure that the school teaches pupils to understand how to live their lives as citizens of modern Britain. Pupils learn regularly about the language and culture of different pupils at the school. Senior leaders keenly consult different groups of pupils, such as the elected school council, for their views about improving the school. Pupils are clear about what language would be derogatory to others. There is an ethos of respect and tolerance in the school.
- Leaders are developing more opportunities for staff to attend relevant training. They are establishing stronger links for staff to visit and liaise with other local schools. Leaders' actions are helping to raise staff confidence and improving their skills. Staff are becoming more confident to try new ways of working, as well as check the accuracy of their assessments of pupils' learning. Even so, differences remain in the quality of teaching which continue to hold back pupils' achievements.

Governance of the school

- Governors understand the school's successes. They recognise the school is improving but is not providing the quality of education they desire. Governors are clear that the standards of teaching and pupils' outcomes have been weak in recent years. They debate and challenge what the headteacher tells them, including about finance. Governors visit the school regularly. Their visits include meetings with middle leaders to understand how specific subjects are developing. Governors question the headteacher about the care and protection of pupils. They make sure that leaders are doing all they can to challenge and support families about pupils' attendance, including for the most vulnerable pupils. Governors know the school's computers have appropriate filters for internet content.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils said they feel safe in the school. They feel confident to raise concerns they may have with staff. They are aware of how to gain independent and confidential advice through telephone helplines should they need it. Pupils gain new knowledge through the safety topics covered in regular school events, assemblies and lessons. Pupils learn about emergency procedures, such as if the school underwent an emergency lockdown. The school site is secure. The identity of visitors is checked fully by office staff.
- Leaders have linked closely with the local authority to strengthen the expertise of staff. As a result, staff know their responsibilities for safeguarding. They have appropriate knowledge of important safeguarding issues, such as how to prevent pupils from having exposure to radicalised views of modern Britain. Staff know where to find the school whistleblowing policy should they require it. Leaders have a clear understanding of the risks posed to pupils by 'county lines' in the illegal drugs trade. Leaders' oversight of safeguarding is shared intentionally across a few trained staff. This means that the school can support families and staff as much as possible with any concerns about pupils' care and protection. Leaders' make regular links with other agencies.

Leaders keep appropriate, secure records of safeguarding information. Leaders use the learning mentor at the school well to provide extra support to individual pupils and their families.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has not been good enough over time to make sure that pupils achieve as strongly as possible across subjects. Staff and leaders are taking determined steps to improve the quality of activities for pupils. Teaching is improving but inconsistencies remain.
- Some teachers pitch work too much towards the needs of the middle-ability pupils, with too little adaptation for the less able or the most able. Some teachers do not then use effectively their assessments of pupils' responses during activities to amend their teaching. When this happens, pupils' learning is negatively affected.
- On occasion, some staff do not model writing accurately to pupils. Some staff do not address weaknesses in pupils' spelling or in their handwriting.
- The school's chosen approaches to the teaching of reading do not ensure that all pupils read well. Staff do not ensure that the less able readers practise reading regularly. Leaders have spotted this weakness and taken recent steps to improve the teaching of reading. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these changes.
- Teachers now plan more precisely how to support and challenge pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics. Even so, some key stage 2 pupils said they find mathematics activities too easy; others said they struggle and would like more help from teachers.
- Sometimes, staff provide photocopied sheets for pupils to use in their books, including in geography. Examples of these seen by inspectors were undemanding and led pupils to cut, stick and colour in, at the expense of more worthwhile learning.
- The most successful teaching builds upon staff's clear understanding of their subject. For example, staff have a good knowledge of how Year 1 pupils learn to say and recognise the sounds that letters represent, as well as which activities make learning rewarding. Older pupils highlighted to inspectors examples of recent, memorable lessons which challenged them to think and to learn. For instance, pupils gained from their study of concave and convex objects in science.
- Recently, staff and leaders have worked successfully to improve the accuracy of their assessments of pupils. This means, for instance, that staff's assessments of pupils' writing are now much more reliable. Staff use this information more carefully to review pupils' achievement and identify where further improvement in teaching is needed.
- Overall, teaching assistants play a valuable role in the quality of assistance for pupils' learning in classes. Teachers and their colleagues work together well to teach specific groups of pupils, such as pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Sometimes, the less able pupils do not get the extra help they need, for example to improve their reading skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils know that successful learning requires effort and persistence. Even on the occasions when they find teaching to be less engaging, pupils keep their concentration and work hard.
- Pupils told inspectors they have a voice that staff and leaders respect and want to hear to help the school to improve further.
- Leaders and staff give a well-considered extra focus to the way in which pupils feel about themselves and their lives. Some staff have recently completed additional training on making sure that this aspect of pupils' development is considered fully across the work of the school.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe at school. They understand how to use the internet wisely.
- Pupils say that bullying at the school is rare. They know how to avoid, identify and address different types of bullying. Staff respond efficiently to any reported issues.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is calm. Pupils move sensibly around the school and arrive punctually for the start of lessons. Disruptions to learning activities are rare.
- Pupils conduct themselves well. They were polite and inquisitive when meeting inspectors around the school and in formal meetings.
- Pupils and parents commented positively to inspectors about the standard of pupils' behaviour at the school. Pupils said staff apply school arrangements consistently. They said staff reward good behaviour and address any low-level and infrequent issues that arise.
- Pupils respect the furniture, resources and text books staff provide to aid their learning. Pupils play together purposefully at breaktimes.
- Pupils' attendance is average. Persistent absence is decreasing, partly due to leaders and staff working well with pupils and families who need the greatest support. Pupils attending the school's breakfast club move calmly and promptly to classrooms at the required time for registration.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Lingering inconsistencies in the quality of teaching continue to hold back some pupils' progress in different subjects. School information demonstrates that pupils' progress remains inconsistent across the school. For instance, some pupils do not make the progress staff expect in mathematics, whereas the picture is stronger in other subjects.

Some of the most able pupils do not make good progress. This is because staff do not deepen pupils' skills and understanding.

- In 2017, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the higher standard in grammar, punctuation and spelling was above the national average. However, weaknesses in some pupils' handwriting mean they are not developing their writing with as much accuracy as they should.
- Pupils are growing in their confidence and enthusiasm to read. However, some lower-ability pupils do not apply their skills proficiently in reading activities, nor do they fully understand what they are reading.
- In geography, some pupils' learning is limited because planned activities do not develop well enough pupils' geographical skills and knowledge.
- Pupils' attainment in science in Year 2 and Year 6 in 2017 was below the national average. Some current pupils are starting to develop better skills to investigate scientific problems, particularly in upper key stage 2. However, inconsistencies remain in pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils leave the school adequately prepared for continuing their education at secondary school. They understand the importance of persistence when tasks are difficult. They know the importance of listening to adults and respecting the views of others. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make average progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Staff support individual pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities with increasing success to make important steps forward in their learning.
- Staff give effective assistance to pupils who speak English as an additional language. As a result, they learn to speak and write English fluently and participate fully in activities.
- The attainment of current pupils in key stages 1 and 2 is rising in reading, writing and mathematics, most strongly in key stage 2.
- In 2016 and 2017, the proportion of pupils' attaining at the expected standard for their age in reading and writing in key stage 1 was below average. In mathematics in 2017, the proportion of Year 2 pupils attaining the expected standards for their age was broadly average. Disadvantaged pupils at the school attained less well than other pupils nationally in 2017.
- In key stage 2, a below average proportion of pupils left Year 6 in 2016 and 2017 having attained the expected standard for reading, writing and mathematics combined.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 attaining the expected standard in the phonics screening check was above average in 2017. Current pupils in Year 1 continue to learn well in understanding the sounds that letters make.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years make good progress from their starting points. They gain a positive start to their education. They move to Year 1 well prepared to continue their learning.

- Children quickly become confident, inquisitive and hard-working because of the skilful support and high expectations from teachers and teaching assistants. Children enjoy coming to school. They gain from good relationships with staff. Children behave positively towards one another. They are not too distracted by visitors, such as an inspector, because their learning is so fascinating.
- Staff in the early years have a clear understanding of how to keep children safe and secure. Parents are happy with the work of the school to support their children.
- Children develop a wide range of valuable skills in talking, reading and writing. This is because staff plan activities carefully and use assessment precisely to identify where children need extra help. Typical activities in the Nursery and Reception classes involve staff and children in much worthwhile talk together.
- Children are becoming confident mathematicians. Staff teach children skilfully in their play and in group activities. For example, during the inspection, staff challenged and supported children successfully to complete a tally chart of other children's favourite activities. This enabled children to practise in a fun way their mathematical recording, as well as the skills of counting and addition. Staff teach children to run, climb, balance and carry objects in the large, organised outdoor area. Staff give careful thought as to what support will challenge and engage children in their learning.
- Following a dip in the quality of provision after the previous inspection, leaders have since made sure they focus closely on the specific needs of the Nursery and Reception classes in their reviews of the school. This work has led to a sharp improvement in the quality of teaching and in children's learning.
- The early years leader and staff link successfully with research and development projects taking place in the region. Leaders have established helpful links with staff in other schools. Leaders' well-considered work has challenged and extended the knowledge and skills of the early years team. Staff participation in training has improved their teaching. For instance, staff now better guide children's thinking, including using high-quality non-fiction books about science topics. Leaders are clear about how to improve their work further by using information about children's outcomes, in addition to their reviews of children's thinking and their emotional development. The successful work of the early years leader and team demonstrates that they have the ability to keep on improving their work.

School details

Unique reference number	104460
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10045821

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John McCaul
Headteacher	Mr Albie Crist
Telephone number	0151 477 8580
Website	www.stluke.knowsley.sch.uk
Email address	stluke@knowsley.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2014

Information about this school

- St Luke's is an average-sized primary school.
- The governing body run an on-site breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The occasions when pupils join or leave the school other than at routine times is average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2014.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school, including with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors reviewed school information about the progress and attainment of current pupils.
- Inspectors checked pupils' work to see what learning and progress have been like this year. Inspectors also reviewed with leaders a sample of pupils' work in mathematics, English, geography and science.
- Inspectors listened to some pupils from key stage 2 read.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders to consider their reviews of the school and their plans for improvement.
- Inspectors met with the school leaders for English, mathematics, science, geography, the use of the pupil premium, the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the early years.
- The lead inspector met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of Knowsley local authority and with a representative of the Liverpool archdiocese. He also spoke by telephone with an adviser from the archdiocese who is supporting the school.
- Inspectors talked with some parents as they dropped their children off at school. Inspectors considered 12 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, including eight free-text responses.
- Inspectors reviewed responses from 18 staff to an Ofsted questionnaire. Inspectors spoke with a sample of staff as they worked in classrooms, corridors and outdoors.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in classes and around the school. Inspectors met with a random sample of eight pupils from key stage 2. Inspectors spoke separately with nine pupils from the school council. There were no responses to consider from pupils to the Ofsted survey.
- Inspectors considered a range of information about safeguarding. Inspectors discussed the care and protection of pupils with several staff, including the school's learning mentor. The lead inspector reviewed the single central record of checks on the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers to work with pupils with an administrator and the headteacher.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sue Dymond

Ofsted Inspector

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