

# Inspection of a good school: St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School

Church Lane, Wolstanton, Newcastle, Staffordshire ST5 0EF

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Inspection dates:

11–12 February 2020

## **Outcome**

St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

There is a strong feeling of togetherness in this school. Leaders, staff and parents work well as a team for the benefit of the pupils. Leaders expect pupils to do their very best and pupils rise to these high expectations. A pupil said, 'We all know each other here. It's hard to put into words, but we want everyone to do well.'

Pupils feel safe and secure. They enjoy coming to school and spending time with their friends and teachers. Pupils listen and behave well in lessons. They are keen to learn new things. Around the school, there is an orderly atmosphere. Staff deal with any problems, including the rare incidents of bullying, quickly and effectively.

Pupils have a clear awareness of the school's values. In particular, they speak confidently about 'determination, compassion, kindness and honesty'. They understand how these values underpin everyday life in school. For example, pupils talk about how they show kindness when they visit the local care home to sing songs and share stories with the residents there.

Almost all parents are positive about the school. They value the close links with the church and the welcoming atmosphere.

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

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are very settled. They are happy to be in school. Teachers plan lots of interesting activities that build on what children already know. Children get excited about their learning, whether they are searching for dragon eggs, playing musical instruments, or discussing stories. Children are keen to share what they know with others. The classrooms and outdoor area are well resourced and support a range of learning activities. Staff maintain close relationships with parents using an online tool and regular face-to-face contact. Parents value this.

In nearly all subjects, including English and mathematics, leaders have mapped out the curriculum so that teachers are clear about what to teach and when to teach it. Lessons build on previous learning and prepare pupils for future learning. As a result, in most subjects, pupils' knowledge and skills develop well over time. Standards achieved in national tests in reading and mathematics are above the national averages. Pupils who are disadvantaged also do very well.

Teachers have good subject knowledge in most subjects. Where appropriate, they use this to plan work that makes links between different curriculum areas. For example, pupils use the knowledge they learn in history to help them compose pieces of writing in English. Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning skilfully to explore and deepen pupils' understanding and knowledge.

The computing curriculum is not as well developed. Staff do not have good subject knowledge in some areas of computing. Consequently, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.

In most cases, teachers take pupils' abilities into account when planning work and activities. In these instances, work is closely matched to pupils' needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in lessons. Staff provide appropriate support for these pupils. Pupils with SEND achieve well. However, in English, the most able pupils are not being routinely challenged in their writing tasks. This limits their learning.

Reading has a high priority across the school. Teachers plan English topics around high-quality texts. They are working hard to nurture a love of reading with some success. Staff teach phonics well across the early years and in Years 1 and 2. Pupils read fluently from an early age and this helps them to learn in other subjects. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics check is above the national average.

Pupils value the wide range of trips, after-school clubs and special events that staff organise. For example, pupils visited mock trenches from the First World War. These activities help to bring learning to life. Pupils enjoy the work that they do in the local community, such as the 'litter pick' organised by the eco-council.

Leaders and those responsible for governance are aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are supported by staff to improve the school continually. Leaders give teachers time to embed their training. Teachers value this. They say that this helps them to become better teachers. Teachers say that leaders are very considerate of their well-being. A teacher said, 'The school is a place where everyone is respected and valued.'

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Keeping pupils safe is the school's top priority. It is a responsibility that all staff share. Staff, including safeguarding leads, are well trained and receive suitable, regular

safeguarding updates. As a result, they know exactly what to do if they have concerns or are worried about a pupil. Pupils get extra help when they need it because leaders work alongside external agencies when required. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. In particular, they are very clear about how to stay safe when they are online.

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

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

- In computing, there is a curriculum plan. However, this plan is not being implemented consistently across the school. Teachers do not possess good subject knowledge in some areas of computing. Consequently, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. For this reason, the transition arrangement has been applied. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are trained to improve their computing subject knowledge. Teachers can then deliver the curriculum plan effectively across the school.
- In English, the writing tasks set by teachers do not routinely challenge the most able pupils. As a result, not all of these pupils are fulfilling their potential and achieving as well as they could. Teachers need to ensure that work set in writing activities is suitably challenging for the most able pupils.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School to be good on 27–28 June 2013.

## **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 school 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143352
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122516
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	411
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David O'Leary
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanne Kirkham
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-wulstans.staffs.sch.uk">www.st-wulstans.staffs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School became an academy on 1 April 2017. When its predecessor school, St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company.
- A section 48 inspection to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School as a Catholic school took place in September 2018.
- The school has a breakfast club operating on the site. This provision is managed by the school.

## Information about this inspection

- I held regular meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. I met with four members of the local academy committee, including the chair. I met with four members of the multi-academy company, including the chair. I met with the chief executive officer separately.
- I held meetings with the special educational needs coordinator and the early years leader.

- As part of the inspection, I carried out deep dives in reading, English and computing.
- I met with groups of pupils, curriculum leaders and teachers to talk about the quality of education at the school.
- I visited classrooms. Many of these visits were with the curriculum leader for English.
- I listened to several groups of pupils read.
- I spoke with pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school. I looked at pupils' work in a range of different subjects to see how well the curriculum is applied.
- Documents relating to safeguarding were checked, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children prior to employment. I checked that the safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented effectively across the school.
- I talked to parents after school. I considered the 108 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the 108 free-text responses received during the inspection.
- I considered the 42 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- I considered a range of documents. I looked at the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, school policies, curriculum documents, published information about pupils' performance, attendance information and minutes of meetings linked to governance.
- I looked at published information on the school's website.

### **Inspection team**

Wayne Simner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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