

Inspection of St Aidan's CofE Primary School Billinge

Off London Fields, Billinge, Wigan, Lancashire WN5 7LS

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy belonging to the St Aidan's family. They said that this helps them to feel happy and cared for. Pupils understand and follow the school values well. They champion each other to 'let their light shine'.

Pupils are polite, well mannered and thoughtful to each other and towards staff. The school is built on a strong culture of respect. Pupils support each other in their learning and their play. They said that 'trusted adults' are there to help them if they have any worries or concerns.

Pupils enjoy holding positions of responsibility, such as Year 6 'Reception buddies' or environmental and extra-curricular ambassadors. They know that their opinions matter and that they are listened to. Pupils feel proud of the contributions that they make to the school and to the wider community.

The school has high expectations for pupils' learning. Pupils know that they are expected to work hard and to succeed. However, their achievement across the school is uneven. Some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not learn all that they should in some subjects.

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

Early reading and phonics have been priorities for the school since the previous inspection. Children in the Nursery class enjoy joining in with songs and rhymes. This prepares them well for learning phonics as soon as they enter the Reception class. Pupils practise reading using books that contain the sounds that they already know. Teachers receive regular training so that they have the expertise to deliver the phonics programme consistently well. Pupils who fall behind in the phonics programme are supported to catch up effectively. This helps pupils to become successful and fluent readers.

Reading is threaded throughout the school. Texts and books are well chosen to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. Older pupils particularly enjoy the stories shared by teachers. They said that teachers read in a way that makes it feel like they have stepped into the book. Pupils enjoy receiving rewards and praise for their hard work with different bookmarks in each year group.

The school has recently developed a curriculum that is ambitious. However, in several subjects, the school has not determined the important knowledge that pupils should know and understand. In addition, in some subjects, the school has not established the order in which pupils will learn new information. This means that some pupils, including those with SEND, do not develop secure foundations on which to build new learning.

Typically, staff have secure subject knowledge. They check on pupils' learning to identify any gaps or misconceptions. However, in some subjects, staff do not have

the expertise that they need to deliver elements of the subject curriculums as well as they should. Consequently, staff sometimes do not support pupils to make secure connections between topics and concepts. This hinders how well some pupils build their knowledge, skills and understanding in these curriculum areas.

Some of the school's methods for checking on the quality of the implementation of the curriculum are also underdeveloped. This means that the school does not have a sufficiently secure understanding of how well staff are delivering the curriculum across the school.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND appropriately. The school is particularly effective in supporting pupils with severe and complex needs. However, at times, staff do not adapt the delivery of the curriculum as effectively as they should for pupils with education, health and care plans. This means that some pupils with SEND struggle to learn alongside their peers.

Pupils behave well. The school is a haven of calm where pupils focus on their learning well. They enjoy playtimes with their friends. Pupils are extremely well mannered and are highly respectful to one another. They learn about relationships, consent and what makes a good friend. Pupils are tolerant of differences between themselves and others. They celebrate the uniqueness of everyone in the community.

The school focuses strongly on pupils' wider development. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe while online and how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. They enjoy the range of trips and visits on offer. Pupils enjoy learning about different careers that may be open to them in the future. These experiences help to build their confidence and prepare them well for life beyond St Aidan's.

Staff appreciate the school's consideration for their workload and well-being. For example, the school has improved the approach to providing pupils with feedback on their learning. Members of the local governing body understand their statutory duties and work closely with the school to aid continued improvement in the quality of education provided for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school has not thought carefully enough about the essential knowledge that pupils should learn. This prevents pupils from achieving as well as they should. The school should determine the knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which this should be taught in these subjects.

- Some staff do not have sufficient subject knowledge to deliver aspects of the curriculum consistently well. This prevents some pupils from having secure foundations on which to build new knowledge and information. The school should ensure that staff deliver the curriculum as effectively as they should.
- The school's methods for checking how well the curriculum is being implemented are underdeveloped. As a result, the school does not have a sufficiently secure understanding of how successfully pupils are learning new knowledge and information. The school should ensure that it has insight into the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning.
- Some staff do not adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND sufficiently well. This hinders how well pupils with SEND learn and achieve in some subjects. The school should ensure that staff are trained to enable pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	104798
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10289867
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Fiona Thomas
Headteacher	Rachel Fisher
Website	www.billingestaidans.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 September 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Liverpool. Its last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in March 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due by the end of 2025.
- A new chair of governors has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school has educational provision for two-year-old children.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum in some other subjects. They spoke with leaders and pupils and reviewed samples of pupils' work in these curriculum areas.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a trusted adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including that relating to behaviour and attendance. Inspectors also considered the school's self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also spoke with some parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff.

Inspection team

Sue Dymond, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Amy Fidler

Ofsted Inspector

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