

Inspection of St Thomas Church of England Primary School, Lydiate

Kenyons Lane, Lydiate, Liverpool, Merseyside L31 0BP

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Thomas Church of England Primary School, Lydiate under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Thomas Church of England Primary School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy.

The head of school is Emily Alty. This school is part of the Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Laurie Kwissa, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Margaret Swinson. There is also an executive headteacher, Mark Ward, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are immensely proud to attend this exceptional school. Children in the early years and pupils across the school thrive, partly due to the care and guidance that they receive from staff. Pupils relish coming to this happy school each day.

The school has an unswerving commitment to excellence which permeates throughout the whole school community. Pupils benefit from a highly engaging curriculum which enables pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to flourish in all aspects of school life. Pupils eagerly rise to meet the school's demanding expectations for their learning. They achieve extremely well.

Pupils behave impeccably. They live and breathe the school's values in all that they say and do. Pupils are exceptionally respectful and tolerant of people from other faiths and cultures. They show a deep understanding of what it means to be active and responsible citizens in modern Britain.

Pupils make an exceptionally strong contribution to the life of the school. For example, every pupil in key stage 2 avidly takes on many leadership roles in school. These include working as arts or humanities ambassadors or members of the diversity team and the caring in the community team.

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

Able supported by the trust, the school has meticulously crafted a highly ambitious curriculum which is steeped in educational research and effective practice. The key knowledge that pupils should learn, and the order in which they should learn it, is clearly identified. This helps pupils to experience an exceptionally well-connected learning journey from the early years to the end of Year 6.

Staff greatly value the high-quality training that the school and trust provide. Staff appreciate the school's actions to reduce their workload, for example by providing curriculum guidance and resources. As a result, staff expertly teach the curriculum with both enthusiasm and flair.

Staff use assessment information exceptionally well to address misconceptions or gaps in pupils' knowledge. Staff emphasise the links with earlier learning when introducing new subject content so that pupils build upon their prior knowledge highly effectively. Pupils progress extremely well through the curriculum.

The school accurately identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Staff provide swift and helpful support for these pupils so that they learn the same content as their peers. Pupils with SEND achieve exceptionally well across the curriculum.

Reading is at the front and centre of the school's curriculum. Staff immerse children in the early years in nursery rhymes and in much-loved stories and traditional tales.

Pupils benefit from consistently high-quality phonics sessions. They read confidently from books that are precisely matched to the sounds that pupils have learned. Any pupils who may find early reading difficult are provided with swift support so that they keep up with the pace of the phonics programme.

Older pupils have extremely positive attitudes to reading. They spoke knowledgeably about different types of texts and their favourite authors.

The school's programme to enhance pupils' personal development is exemplary. The 'beacons of light' lessons enable pupils to gain a deep understanding of the wider world. These lessons also support pupils to learn about important issues such as how to save money and how to spend it wisely. Pupils who met with inspectors proudly showed their individual passports which they use to record the many and varied activities that they have undertaken as part of their wider development. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils have a breadth of opportunities to develop their confidence and teamwork skills to an exceptional level. For instance, pupils regularly perform in dance and drama activities as well as sporting events. Pupils also use their enterprise skills to make items to sell, which raises money for causes close to their heart.

The school places a high priority on ensuring that pupils behave extremely well. Children in the early years quickly learn the school's routines and values. Pupils proudly follow the school's rules. The care and consideration that they show to staff and to each other are exemplary.

Trustees and members of the local governing body provide the school with unwavering support and challenge. They share the school's continual drive for excellence in all areas of school life. Pupils and parents and carers who shared their views with inspectors cannot praise the school highly enough. They feel fortunate to belong to such a harmonious and caring school community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	145096
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10337714
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Margaret Swinson
CEO of the trust	Laurie Kwissa
Headteacher	Mark Ward (Executive Headteacher) Emily Alty (Head of School)
Website	www.stthomaslydiate.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- This school is a voluntary aided Church of England school which is part of the Diocese of Liverpool. The most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in November 2018. The next section 48 inspection is scheduled to take place in the 2025/26 academic year.
- The school runs a before-school and an after-school club.
- St Thomas Church of England Primary School, Lydiate converted to become an academy in November 2017. When its predecessor school, St Thomas Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.

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 provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff in school.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO and trustees, including the chair of trustees. She met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in other subjects. They spoke to some pupils about their learning in these subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- An inspector spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Louise McArdle, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rebecca Gough

Ofsted Inspector

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