

Inspection of De La Salle School

Mill Brow, Eccleston, St Helens, Merseyside WA10 4QH

Inspection dates: 4–5 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders at all levels, including governors, are determined to bring about high-quality education for all pupils. The pupils who responded to the online survey and spoke to inspectors are impressed by the positive differences their school leaders are making.

Pupils value their education. They behave well and try hard in class. Pupils move sensibly around school, arrive promptly for lessons and wear their uniforms with pride. Pupils know and think about the school's Lasallian values.

Pupils say that they feel safe. Pupils treat each other the same, regardless of any differences, such as faith or sexuality. Pupils get along well together. Bullying is rare. It is sorted out quickly if it does happen. Staff, including the headteacher, know the pupils well. They take the time to speak with pupils about any concerns which pupils may have.

The quality of education is improving. Pupils achieve better in their examinations than previously, but still not well enough. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

In the past, the school did not plan the curriculum well enough. This is now better, but needs to improve further. Pupils do not get to learn what they need to know in some subjects in key stage 3.

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

The headteacher has transformed how the school is led. He provides pupils, parents and carers, and staff with opportunities to say what is going well and what needs to improve. Leaders listen to what they are told. They then plan what needs to happen. The school is moving forward in a unified way.

The quality of education which pupils receive has improved. Some curriculums, such as that for mathematics, are planned well. They set out clearly the essential knowledge that pupils need and the order in which they should learn this. Other curriculums, such as those in English and science, are not as well developed. However, leaders are making the improvements needed. Leaders in these subjects have the know-how to bridge any gaps. They are helping pupils to catch up quickly.

Leaders are reviewing the school's key stage 3 curriculum. This curriculum leaves pupils short of important knowledge and cultural capital in some subjects. Pupils will need this knowledge for their future lives. Leaders have well-developed plans in place to overcome these weaknesses.

Pupils can take courses at key stage 4 which match their needs and interests. Many pupils choose to follow academic courses. Around half of pupils choose courses which meet the requirements of the English Baccalaureate. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Art and design-based courses are also

very popular at key stage 4. As soon as pupils have the essential subject knowledge, teachers encourage them to work on their own ambitious projects. These opportunities stretch and excite pupils' thinking. This means that pupils achieve well in these subjects.

Leaders have tackled disadvantaged pupils' poor attendance and achievement head-on. This has led to better attendance and outcomes for many disadvantaged pupils. However, some disadvantaged pupils continue to be absent too often. This means that they miss out on important learning.

Leaders take their duty to provide a good education for pupils with SEND seriously. This responsibility includes those pupils who are part of the resourced provision. These pupils enjoy learning and socialising with one another, as well as with other pupils. However, in some subjects, pupils with SEND are not provided with good-enough support. This is especially the case at key stage 3.

Leaders, including governors, make sure that pupils' personal development is always in the spotlight. Pupils feel interested and involved in what goes on. For example, they like to talk about the school's work to become an eco-school. They are excited by the record attempt to build the world's biggest bug hotel. Pupils are prepared well to become involved in and make a positive difference to the world in which we live.

Staff strengthen pupils' experiences and cultural capital beyond lessons. Many different activities, clubs and responsibilities are provided. A lot of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, take part in and enjoy these opportunities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff take pupils' safety seriously. They take the time to get to know pupils well. Training is regular, so staff know what to look out for if pupils are at risk. Staff know how to deal with concerns. Leaders ensure that, when concerns are raised, vulnerable pupils and their families receive appropriate support. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They know who to talk to or contact if they are worried or unhappy. Leaders are introducing more ways for pupils to report any concerns anonymously.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' examination results are improving but pupils do not perform as well as they should at the end of key stage 4 in several subjects. This is the case for all pupils, but especially those who are disadvantaged. Leaders must continue to

take action to remove these inequalities and secure pupils' good achievement across the board.

- Leaders have acted this year to improve the quality of the curriculum at key stage 3. This is because the previous plans did not meet pupils' entitlement to a broad and ambitious curriculum in some subjects. Pupils do not know and remember all that they should. Leaders must implement a key stage 3 curriculum that has at least the breadth and ambition of the national curriculum.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved markedly since the last inspection. However, a minority of disadvantaged pupils still do not attend often enough. This means they miss out on important learning. Leaders should continue to improve the attendance of these pupils so that they attend regularly.
- The quality of support that pupils with SEND receive varies from class to class, especially in key stage 3. As a result, these pupils sometimes struggle to keep up and gain the knowledge that they need. Leaders should make sure that teachers and other adults provide more consistently the quality of support which these pupils need in key stage 3 so that they achieve well.

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

Unique reference number	104834
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10121938
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Teresa Sims
Headteacher	Andrew Rannard
Website	www.delasalle.st-helens.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	20–21 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at the Launchpad Centre.
- The school is part of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in October 2019.
- The school includes a specialist resourced provision for 18 pupils aged 11 to 16 years of age. This provision supports pupils with autism spectrum disorder.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, the school improvement partner, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- We reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. We spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. We also asked the pupils how they keep themselves safe and what to do if they have concerns.

- We took account of the views of the 508 pupils who responded to Ofsted’s online pupil questionnaire.
- We held discussions with staff and considered the responses of 62 staff to Ofsted’s online staff questionnaire.
- We considered the views of the 215 parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey, including the 129 free-text responses.
- In considering the quality of education, we focused on art, English, geography, mathematics and science. We discussed the arrangements for the curriculum and teaching with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. We visited lessons and then talked with pupils about what they had learned. We looked at examples of pupils’ work in their exercise books and folders in these subjects.

Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Nell Banfield	Ofsted Inspector
Denah Jones	Ofsted Inspector
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