

Inspection of De La Salle School

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

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

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?

This school has an atmosphere of warmth and friendliness that helps pupils feel at ease. The strong, positive relationships between staff and pupils exemplify the school's values.

Pupils have responded positively to leaders' raised expectations of behaviour. They told inspectors that behaviour has improved considerably recently. Around school, pupils behave well. During lessons, most teachers deal appropriately with low-level disruption. Overall, pupils try their best during lessons and they move around the school calmly and sensibly.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have acted appropriately to improve the quality of education for pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have access to the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. However, in some subjects, there remain weaknesses in how well the curriculum is delivered. This means that in these subjects, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils told inspectors that they have an adult in school that they can speak with if they have any worries. Leaders deal with any incidents of bullying or derogatory language swiftly and effectively. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe in school.

Pupils benefit from different leadership opportunities. For example, they enjoy being members of the '1719 society' on which they help to make decisions about the school. Pupils are proud of their charitable work to help and support vulnerable members of society.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision). For instance, all pupils now learn at least one modern foreign language. Leaders have clearly selected the key building blocks of knowledge that pupils need to learn, and staff are clear about when this knowledge should be taught.

Teachers know their subjects well. They engage in regular, suitable training to keep their subject knowledge fresh. In some subjects, teachers use their expertise to deliver new learning clearly. However, in other subjects, teachers do not select the most appropriate activities to support pupils to learn the intended curriculum. For instance, some teachers' activity choices do not help pupils to apply earlier learning and deepen further their understanding of concepts.

Leaders support teachers to use assessment strategies to check how well pupils have learned the intended curriculum. In some subjects, teachers do not use these strategies effectively enough to identify and address pupils' misconceptions in a

timely manner. Consequently, some pupils do not secure a deep enough body of knowledge on which they can build securely.

Leaders identify pupils' additional needs swiftly and accurately. They have equipped staff with the information they need to be able to support pupils with SEND appropriately. In the main, staff are adept at using these strategies to adapt how they deliver curriculums if needed. This helps pupils with SEND, including those who attend the specially resourced provision, to learn the intended curriculum alongside their peers. Pupils with SEND play a full and active role in the life of the school.

Leaders have made reading a high priority. There are clear systems in place to identify those pupils, in key stages 3 and 4, who find reading more difficult. Staff provide carefully designed support to help these pupils to catch up with their reading quickly. Nevertheless, while staff have received training in how to support pupils with reading, some staff lack the expertise to deliver additional reading sessions for pupils as leaders intend.

In the main, pupils display positive attitudes to their learning. Staff are supported well by leaders to manage pupils' behaviour and apply sanctions consistently. There is a calm and respectful atmosphere in the school. Added to this, leaders have acted to identify and address the barriers to some pupils' regular attendance. However, while more pupils are attending school regularly, there is still a small proportion of disadvantaged pupils who do not attend as regularly as they should.

Leaders provide a range of opportunities to support pupils' development. Leaders ensure that pupils, including those who attend the specially resourced provision, benefit from high-quality careers education. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education. For example, at the end of the last academic year, all Year 11 pupils went on to further education, employment or training.

Pupils learn about different faiths and religions. This helps them to develop an understanding and respect for those who might have different beliefs from their own. Teachers are equipped well to support pupils to develop their resilience and independence. Through a wide range of learning and activities, pupils gain the skills they need to be active and responsible citizens.

Staff told inspectors that they are happy working in the school and they feel supported to manage their workload and look after their own well-being. Members of the governing body use their expertise well to provide an appropriate level of challenge and support to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have clear processes in place to identify those pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders have ensured that staff benefit from regular and relevant

safeguarding training. Staff dutifully follow leaders' procedures for reporting concerns about pupils' welfare and well-being.

Leaders are swift to act on any concerns and follow them up appropriately. They work closely with external agencies, such as local charities, to ensure that pupils get the support that they need.

Staff have worked with pupils to raise their awareness of safeguarding risks. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships and the ways in which they can look after their own mental health.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not select appropriate activities to support pupils to learn some aspects of the intended curriculum. This means that some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, do not secure a deep and rich body of knowledge. Leaders should support teachers to choose the most effective teaching approaches to secure pupils' learning over time as outlined in the curriculum.
- In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment strategies well enough to identify and address pupils' misconceptions. Consequently, some pupils do not secure a body of knowledge on which they can build securely. Leaders should ensure that they finalise their approaches to assessment so that teachers can use assessment strategies effectively to remedy any gaps in pupils' knowledge in a timely manner.
- Some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, do not attend school as often as they should. This hinders these pupils' learning of the intended curriculum. Leaders should ensure that they continue to support pupils and their families so that they attend school regularly.

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](#)' 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	10286227
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	1,195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Teresa Sims
Headteacher	Andrew Rannard
Website	www.delasalle.st-helens.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 July 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The most recent section 48 took place in October 2019.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. It is used by 20 pupils from Years 7 to 11 with autism spectrum disorder.
- Leaders use four registered alternative provisions for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the third routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with six members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also met with a representative of both the local authority and the archdiocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, art and design, history and Spanish. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke with leaders about the curriculum and assessment and visited lessons in other subjects.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, the school's self-evaluation and leaders' improvement plans.
- Inspectors considered leaders' safeguarding processes and procedures. They discussed matters relating to safeguarding with pupils and staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Jenny Jones, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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