

# Inspection of a good school: St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Tithebarn Road, Knowsley, Prescot, Merseyside, L34 0HA

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Inspection dates:

9 and 10 June 2021

## **Outcome**

St John Fisher Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

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

The school's mission and vision are a golden thread running through all aspects of school life. Leaders encourage pupils to live out the school's Catholic values in their words and deeds. Pupils said that this makes the school a happy, friendly and caring place to be.

Pupils are quick to celebrate each other's strengths and achievements. They are quick to praise their peers where it is due. They are considerate towards others when they are struggling and are keen to offer support.

Pupils get on well together and any rare fallings out are often resolved by the pupils themselves. Pupils are confident that when they ask their teachers for help, including with bullying, issues will be resolved fairly and sensitively. Teachers, parents and carers agree that pupils are well cared for.

Pupils' school life is enhanced by the many trips, visitors and clubs on offer. Leaders make sure that pupils experience some of what their local area offers, such as the Tate Modern and Chester Zoo.

Pupils progress well across the different national curriculum subjects. They enjoy learning new things and behave well in lessons. Pupils take pride in their work and pay heed to their teachers' advice. This helps them to improve their work.

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

Leaders, staff and governors want every pupil to 'shine'. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders have built on the strengths identified at the previous inspection, for example by improving the mathematics curriculum.

Leaders have devised an ambitious, broad and engaging curriculum. Subject leaders have thought about what pupils need to learn and remember so that pupils get a good

grounding in the subjects that they study. Pupils are able to talk knowledgeably about what they have been taught, such as the Viking invasions. That said, in some subjects, leaders have not set out clearly how teachers build up pupils' understanding of some important concepts. For example, how they help pupils to grasp the abstract idea of empire in history and the definition of place in geography.

Children get off to a strong start in early reading. From the start of the Reception Year, teachers introduce the school's phonics programme. Regular training helps teaching staff to deliver this programme confidently and consistently well. Phonics and early reading are taught every day across the Reception Year and Year 1. Teachers routinely check on pupils' learning and put in timely support for any pupils who are falling behind. Pupils make strong progress in the reading curriculum from the start.

Leaders have also made sure that there are sufficient books that match the sounds that pupils are learning. They make sure that every pupil accesses books that they can read accurately and fluently.

Leaders and teachers know their pupils well. They identify any emerging needs quickly, putting into place suitable support to help these pupils catch up quickly across the curriculum. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, leaders have put in place effective arrangements for those pupils who need regular breaks to help them maintain concentration.

The school is calm and orderly throughout the school day. Leaders' high expectations are established right from the start. The youngest children help to tidy up, take turns and share. Across the school, pupils try hard and behave well. Bullying is rare.

The school helps pupils to find their place in the community and wider world. The school is proud of achieving a national award for promoting children's rights. Pupils have been involved in raising money for charity through recycling. Pupils take good care of their school dog, Star.

Staff like working at this school. They feel appreciated by leaders, pupils and parents. Leaders listen to staff views about any planned changes. This means that staff do not feel overburdened.

There have been a number of changes to the membership of the governing body, just prior to and during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. The chair and vice-chair of governors have kept a strong oversight of leaders' work since March 2020. That said, the arrangements for the induction of new governors' have not been as quick as they should have been. New governors have not accessed the training needed to help them fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders carry out the required checks to reassure themselves that staff are suitable to work with pupils. Staff undertake frequent safeguarding training so that they understand their roles and responsibilities.

Leaders ensure that pupils know the potential risks, such as gangs, that they may face in the community. Leaders make sure that pupils know what they can do to mitigate these risks. Pupils know that there are adults who they can talk to if they have any worries. This makes pupils feel well cared for and safe.

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

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

- Leaders have implemented a broad and ambitious curriculum. The curriculum plans set out what is taught and when in each subject. However, some of these plans do not sequence learning as effectively as they should. This means that pupils do not always connect new knowledge with existing knowledge. Leaders should consider more carefully what is taught and when in each subject. They should ensure that the chosen curriculum content allows pupils to learn new knowledge in the appropriate depth required.
- There have been considerable changes in the composition of the governing body. The newly and recently appointed governors lack the experience and expertise of their colleagues. This limits the capacity of the governing body to support and challenge school leaders as effectively as it should. The governing body should ensure that these newly and recently appointed governors access suitable training and support to help them carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively.

## **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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 27 June 2012.

## **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>	104476
<b>Local authority</b>	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10193950
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	227
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Daryl Oprey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michelle Forrest
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stjohnfisherprimary.co.uk/">www.stjohnfisherprimary.co.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 March 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This is a catholic primary school.
- The school had its most recent section 48 inspection, undertaken by the Archdiocese of Liverpool, in November 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection is due in November 2022.
- The school opened a nursery class in January 2019.

## Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders and class teachers. Inspectors met with a representative of the Archdiocese and members of the governing body, including the vice chair.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors considered responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 24 free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered 21 responses to the staff survey.

- Inspectors met with the people responsible for safeguarding in the school. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding. Inspectors spoke to staff, parents and pupils about safeguarding. Inspectors also considered the survey responses from staff, parents and pupils around safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and playtimes. Inspectors spoke to pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of pupils. Inspectors considered 16 responses to the pupil survey.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors considered the school's approach to the teaching of phonics and early reading. inspectors also explored how leaders plan and organise the mathematics and art and design curricula. Inspectors spoke to teachers and subject leaders. Inspectors visited lessons with subject leaders. Inspectors listened to pupils read. Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books as well as other evidence of their learning.
- 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.

### **Inspection team**

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Christine Howard

Ofsted Inspector

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