

Inspection of a good school: St Paul's Catholic Junior School

Spring Grove, West Derby, Liverpool, Merseyside, L12 8SJ

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 September 2021

Outcome

St Paul's Catholic Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to St Paul's. They enjoy positive relationships with their friends and the staff of the school. Teachers encourage pupils to always try their best. Pupils understand the school values and they do all they can to 'be kind, be respectful, be resilient'.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils live up to these expectations. They are polite and courteous to their peers and the adults in the school. Pupils are rewarded for their high standards of behaviour and hard work. They particularly value the opportunity to enjoy a hot chocolate and a chat with their headteacher.

Pupils feel safe and supported in school. They said that bullying and name-calling are rare and would always be dealt with by their teachers. Pupils stated that teachers always listen to them. Consequently, pupils are happy to speak to staff about any concerns or worries that they may have.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities to take on the many roles and responsibilities made available to them. They are excited about the voting that is due to take place for this year's school councillors, junior lord mayors and mathematics and English ambassadors. In addition to this, pupils can access a wealth of extra-curricular activities.

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

Leaders, staff and governors are united in their view that no limit should be placed on pupils' achievement, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). To this end, leaders have designed an ambitious and inclusive curriculum.

Subject leaders have all accessed training to help them create effective plans for their curriculum area. They have produced plans that appropriately set out the order of learning. For example, pupils learn about different periods of history in a logical order. This gives them a strong understanding of historical timelines. Older pupils can explain

how close the end of the Victorian era was to their current study of the First World War. Leaders' plans highlight the most important knowledge and vocabulary that they want all pupils to know and remember. However, on some occasions, teachers do not allow for pupils to revisit and consolidate this information. As a result, pupils sometimes forget some of this content in the longer term. This stops them from building on previous learning.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. Recent changes to the reading curriculum have resulted in more effective and consistent practice across the school. Pupils who need extra help with phonics are supported as soon as they enter the school. Well-trained staff provide pupils with daily phonics sessions. Staff carefully choose books that enable pupils to practise and build on the sounds that they know. This is helping those pupils who find reading difficult to catch up.

Teachers build pupils' comprehension skills effectively through carefully selected texts. Pupils gain a love of reading through the texts that teachers read to them, as well as the opportunity to explore the books in the well-stocked library. Pupils talked with enthusiasm about reading and the rewards that they receive for their efforts. They particularly enjoyed meeting various authors in school, including Frank Cottrell-Boyce.

Pupils with SEND are supported well. Leaders use their expertise and that of outside agencies to ensure the needs of pupils are identified correctly. Leaders have trained staff to effectively adapt activities so that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is of a high standard. They enjoy the responsibility of looking after the school vegetable garden and raising funds for local and national charities.

Governors meet regularly and are knowledgeable about many aspects of the school. However, they are less well informed about subjects other than English and mathematics. This limits their ability to support and challenge leaders about the quality of education that pupils receive.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They are very grateful of the consideration that leaders have for their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created an effective culture of safeguarding at this school. Staff are regularly trained and updated in all aspects of safeguarding. They know how to identify any possible signs of abuse. Staff recognise the importance of immediately reporting and recording any concerns that they may have.

Leaders have ensured that all staff and governors fully understand the risks that pupils may face within the local area and online. Leaders have carefully designed a curriculum

that helps pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They are taught about topics such as appropriate and inappropriate information-sharing when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers sometimes miss the opportunity to recap the key content and vocabulary that subject leaders have identified in the curriculum planning. This is hindering pupils from making connections with previous knowledge when learning new content. Leaders should ensure that teachers are checking the key content that pupils know and remember, so that pupils can build on their prior learning.
- Governors are less well informed about subjects other than English and mathematics. As a result, they are unclear about the overall quality of education that pupils receive. Leaders should ensure that governors are better able to understand the full curriculum on offer at the school so that they can offer informed support and challenge to leaders.

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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 4 and 5 May 2016.

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.

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	104661
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10199741
Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	495
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Anthony McKee
Headteacher	Mr Jamie Luck
Website	www.spcj.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 – 5 May 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher, and two new deputy headteachers have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- St Paul's Catholic Junior School is a voluntary aided Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection took place in June 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in June 2024.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff. He met with a representative of the local authority, a representative of the diocese and three governors, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, history and mathematics. This involved visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, meeting with subject leaders and speaking to pupils and teachers. The inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. He also held discussions with the subject leaders for design and technology and computing.

- The inspector monitored pupils' behaviour around school, during lessons and at lunch and breaktimes. He also met with groups of pupils to hear their views about school life.
- The inspector evaluated the 28 responses on Ofsted Parent View, the online questionnaire, along with 19 responses to the free-text facility. He spoke to parents and carers at the start of the school day, to gather their views about the school. The inspector also considered the 33 responses to the staff survey and 58 responses to the pupil survey.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact with school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

Inspection team

John Tomlinson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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