

Inspection of St Finbar's Catholic Primary School

South Hill Road, Liverpool, Merseyside L8 9RY

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 November 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

St Finbar's is a happy and welcoming place that pupils enjoy attending. They said that they have lots of friends and that 'no one is left out'. Pupils said that they feel safe because staff are kind and look after them well.

Teachers have high expectations for pupils and pupils do their best to live up to these. Pupils work in calm and orderly classrooms, uninterrupted by poor behaviour. They are well mannered and show respect for their teachers and friends. Pupils engage positively in their learning and they achieve well. Pupils said that bullying is rare but, if it does happen, staff will sort it out quickly.

Pupils are proud of the work that they do to support others, such as fundraising for local charities. They enjoy the many after-school clubs on offer, such as singing, drawing and Lego club. Pupils also appreciate the opportunity to hold responsibilities, for example, as a school councillor or acting as a 'playground buddy' for younger pupils.

Pupils benefit from the many trips that teachers organise to support their learning. For instance, pupils in Year 2 have recently visited a zoo and pupils in Year 5 thoroughly enjoyed their science trip.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that allows most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, to achieve well.

The curriculum in many subjects is well organised. For example, in science, leaders have structured learning carefully so that pupils' knowledge builds up from the early years through to Year 6. Teachers ensure that pupils revisit prior learning regularly so that important knowledge is secure. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and they use this to deliver the curriculums well. As a result, pupils have a secure understanding of their earlier learning. For instance, in science, they use scientific vocabulary fluently and accurately. However, in a minority of subjects, leaders have not organised curriculums as thoughtfully. This hinders pupils from making connections between what they are learning and their knowledge from previous years.

From the moment that children arrive in early years, leaders have ensured that they benefit from a well-structured approach to learning phonics. Staff are highly knowledgeable about early reading because of the training that they have received. As a result, they deliver the phonics programme well.

Across the school, pupils have access to a wide range of books. They enjoy reading and do so regularly. Teachers quickly identify those pupils who fall behind and provide effective support to help them to catch up. Staff match pupils' reading books

well to the sounds that pupils are learning. As a result, almost all pupils become confident, fluent readers by the end of Year 2.

Leaders and staff know pupils well. Staff work closely with pupils and their families to check on and look after their well-being. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. For instance, they recently celebrated Eid as a whole school. Leaders successfully develop pupils' awareness and understanding of equality and diversity. As a result, pupils know why democracy, respect and tolerance are important. This prepares them well for later life.

Pupils behave well in and around school. This means that teachers can focus on delivering the curriculum. Pupils said that any incidents of poor behaviour are sorted out quickly. Children in the early years play happily together. Older pupils said that if they had a problem at playtime they could speak to staff or a 'buddy'.

Leaders have ensured that there are effective procedures in place to identify pupils with SEND. Leaders carefully check that the support for this group of pupils is having a positive effect. Those pupils with additional emotional needs are supported expertly by well-trained staff.

Members of the governing body are proud to be a part of the school community. They are highly knowledgeable about many aspects of the school, such as the well-being of staff and pupils, which they have prioritised in recent months. They are less well informed about how well pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, are learning the curriculum.

All staff enjoy working at the school. They value the support that leaders and governors provide. Staff appreciate the steps that leaders have taken to make their workloads more manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there are robust procedures in place to help to keep pupils safe. All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. They are alert to the potential signs of harm, including peer-on-peer abuse.

Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Leaders work effectively with other agencies to provide appropriate support for families. Parents and carers are positive about the care that staff provide for pupils. Pupils also learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they know what to do if they have a concern when they are online or dealing with strangers.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Members of the governing body do not have an accurate view about how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. As a result, they have not provided appropriate challenge to leaders about how well pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are achieving across the curriculum. Those responsible for governance must ensure that they understand how well pupils are learning so that they can hold leaders to account more effectively.
- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculums in a small number of subjects are sufficiently well organised. As a result, pupils struggle to make connections and build successfully on earlier learning. Leaders should ensure that pupils' learning in these subjects is organised more carefully so that pupils can make links with their prior knowledge and deepen their learning over time.

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	104640
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10204401
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Angela Williams
Headteacher	Janet Conley
Website	www.st-finbars.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 and 22 September 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection was in November 2018.
- The school does not use alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with four members of the governing body, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and other staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's staff online survey.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

- Inspectors spoke with pupils to gather their views about the school. Inspectors spoke with parents and carers at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors checked on safeguarding procedures and relevant documentation. Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour around school and considered leaders’ attendance and behaviour information.
- Inspectors considered a range of other school documentation, including leaders’ self-evaluation and plans for improvement.
- Inspectors did deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science and computing. As part of this work, inspectors visited lessons and spoke with subject leaders and teachers. Inspectors reviewed pupils’ work and spoke with them about their learning. The lead inspector observed pupils read to trusted adults.

Inspection team

Gary Bevin, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Sandie La Porta

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021