

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

Farmfield Drive, Beechwood, Prenton, Merseyside CH43 7TE

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Inspection date: 6 April 2022

## **Outcome**

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

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

Most pupils enjoy attending St Paul's Catholic Primary School. Staff know pupils and their families well. Pupils try their best to meet the high expectations that staff have for them for both their learning and behaviour. This helps most pupils to achieve well in a variety of subjects.

Pupils feel safe in school. They are greeted warmly by their teachers at the start of the school day. Pupils understand that adults in the school will listen to their worries or concerns. At breaktimes, pupils play happily with their friends, keeping active through a range of activities, such as skipping and playing with bats and balls.

Pupils are respectful to staff and to their friends. They give visitors to the school a heartfelt welcome. Pupils are polite, and they move around the school in an orderly manner. Most pupils behave well and want to learn. Pupils told inspectors that they are confident that any instances of bullying will be dealt with effectively by staff.

Pupils enjoy a varied range of opportunities beyond the subjects that they study. For example, some pupils in key stage 2 have recently participated in a dance festival and performed at a local theatre.

Parents and carers hold leaders and staff in high regard. They typically commented that their children are thriving under the care of helpful and supportive staff.

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

Leaders, governors and staff want to provide the best possible education for all pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). To this end, leaders have thought carefully about the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that they want pupils to learn, from the early years through to Year 6. Leaders provide suitable guidance for teachers about what content should be taught and the order in which it should be delivered.

Leaders monitor how effectively most subject curriculums, such as reading and mathematics, are delivered by teachers. However, leaders' systems to monitor some subjects in the wider curriculum are not as well developed. This is because many aspects of leaders' monitoring ceased because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, leaders do not have a secure understanding of whether the intended curriculum in these subjects is being delivered as well in practice, and if pupils are knowing more and remembering more.

Staff have accessed a varied range of training opportunities to keep their teaching skills fresh and up to date, including training for staff to help them to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified quickly, including children in the early years. Pupils with SEND routinely learn alongside their friends in class and have access to the same ambitious curriculum.

Pupils enjoy reading. As soon as they start in the early years there is a clear focus on developing children's reading skills and the teaching of phonics. Children confidently recite rhymes and poems. Staff support children well to develop their language and communication skills. For example, staff skilfully extend children's language by supporting them to use more descriptive vocabulary.

Pupils read books that are closely matched to the sounds that they have learned. Staff make effective use of assessment to support those pupils who are struggling with reading. This is helping pupils to catch up with learning they have lost because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils also benefit from authors' visits to the school. These visits help to promote pupils' love of reading.

Teachers explain new learning well. Where misconceptions appear, teachers are quick to address the underlying causes. For instance, in mathematics, teachers clarify pupils' understanding of how to work out mathematical problems using division. This helps pupils to apply previous learning to new content.

Mostly, pupils concentrate and behave well in lessons. Staff handle any minor disruptions in a calm and sensitive manner. However, some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. This hinders these pupils in their learning.

Pupils have access to a broad range of experiences to enhance their personal development. They enjoy attending an exciting range of clubs after school, including activities to develop their skills in gardening and sport. Pupils talked excitedly about a forthcoming trip to the theatre. They understand the importance of keeping themselves fit and healthy. Through the curriculum, pupils are made aware of the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They are supportive of the headteacher, but not afraid to ask probing questions about important aspects of the school's work.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They appreciate all that leaders do to support their workload and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand that everyone has a responsibility to safeguard pupils. All staff have had safeguarding training. This helps them to identify those pupils who may be at risk from harm. Staff have a secure awareness of the potential safeguarding risks within the local community. Leaders provide timely support for families facing challenging circumstances.

Pupils know how to keep themselves free from harm when accessing the internet. They understand that behaviours such as peer-on-peer abuse are unacceptable.

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

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

- Due to the pandemic, subject leaders have not made detailed checks to ensure that curriculum thinking for some subjects in the wider curriculum is working in practice. As a result, they do not have a secure understanding of how well pupils are achieving in these subjects or if teachers are implementing these subjects effectively. Leaders need to ensure that the monitoring arrangements for these subjects are of the same high quality as is evident in other areas of the curriculum, such as reading and mathematics.
- Some pupils are reluctant to attend school as often as they should. This prevents these pupils from progressing through the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that they support these pupils and their families to attend school regularly so that pupils' poor attendance does not impede their learning and development.

## **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 evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2013.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105070
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	10226206
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	116
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Brian O'Connell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christine Fenna
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stpauls.wirral.sch.uk">www.stpauls.wirral.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- School leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- This school is a Roman Catholic primary school and is part of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in 2019.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the 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 and members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with six members of the governing body, and with a representative from the Diocese of Shrewsbury.
- The lead inspector held an online meeting with two representatives from the local authority.

- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding. They spoke to staff about safeguarding, and about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school, in class and in the outdoor play area.
- The lead inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives into early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at examples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to five pupils read with a familiar adult. Inspectors also spoke with curriculum leaders in a small number of other subjects.

### **Inspection team**

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Robinson

Ofsted Inspector

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