

Inspection of a good school: Ladymount Catholic Primary School

Portal Road, Pensby, Wirral, Merseyside CH61 5YD

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 February 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this school. Pupils are safe and they value the relationships that they have with their teachers who, pupils stated, make learning fun. Pupils rarely fall out and leaders take sufficient action to deal with any bullying concerns when they arise.

Pupils spoke highly about the variety of clubs, which range from fencing to chess. In particular, the choir club is much valued and well-attended. Pupils in the choir perform regularly across the region, including the nearby cathedral, and win awards for their singing.

Pupils live out the 'learn to love' part of the school motto particularly well through their kind actions toward each other. For example, older pupils help the younger ones to play nicely at social times. They also tend to their safety by picking them up, dusting them down and giving them a hug when they fall. Pupils are sociable and well mannered when sitting to eat their lunch, which makes dining together a pleasurable experience for all.

Most pupils rise to leaders' high expectations for behaviour and learning. In most subjects, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. However, this is not replicated in the early years. This is because leaders have not fully designed the curriculum for children in the early years, and teachers in this part of the school have not established positive behaviour routines. As a result, children in the Reception Year do not achieve as well as they should. They are not prepared well for key stage 1.

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

In many subjects, leaders have successfully implemented carefully designed curriculums for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Leaders have clearly identified the important knowledge that

they expect pupils to learn and the order in which this knowledge will be taught. Teachers deliver these curriculums well because they have good subject knowledge and receive clear guidance from subject leaders. This helps pupils to develop their knowledge securely in these subjects. However, leaders have not given the same attention to the curriculum for children in the early years. Leaders have not identified the specific knowledge that children should learn through many areas of learning beyond literacy and mathematics. Across much of the early years curriculum, teachers are left to their own devices to decide what to teach and how to deliver it. This means that children in the early years do not develop the secure foundations of knowledge that they need for future learning.

Teachers use assessment strategies effectively to check on pupils' learning. They identify when pupils need extra support and provide useful help and guidance within lessons. Teachers also reflect on assessment information well to adjust future lessons in order to revisit the subject content that pupils have not fully secured. Leaders ensure that staff are effective at identifying pupils who may have SEND. They arrange additional support for these pupils where it is required.

Pupils learn phonics as soon as they arrive in the Reception Year. Leaders have ensured that teachers are well trained to teach phonics and they deliver the phonics programme effectively. The books that pupils read align well to the sounds that they know. Leaders arrange additional support for the pupils that need extra help with learning to read. This support has a positive impact on closing the gaps that pupils have in their knowledge of sounds. As a result, pupils learn to read confidently and fluently.

Leaders cater well for pupils' personal development. The curriculum helps pupils to develop their knowledge of physical health and mental well-being. Pupils have opportunities to take on leadership roles and other responsibilities at the school. They carry out these roles with enthusiasm. Pupils meet with representatives of different faith and diversity organisations, which develops pupils' cultural understanding and respect for others. This helps to prepare them for life in modern Britain.

Most pupils behave well in class and around the school. They enjoy their learning and engage in their lessons. Pupils play well together during social times and take pride in looking after their school environment. However, children in the early years do not develop the same sensible behaviours as quickly as they should. Sometimes, children run around their classroom and push past each other when moving between activities. Staff do not address these occurrences and have not clearly established effective classroom routines for children to follow.

Governors understand their roles and responsibilities. They play an active role in the life of the school. Leaders engage well with staff and take account of their workload. Staff appreciate these efforts. For example, staff spoke positively of the recent changes to the school's assessment policy.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know how to recognise the signs that suggest a pupil might be at risk. They alert leaders to these concerns. Leaders take sufficient action to manage these concerns. However, some staff are unclear about the systems and procedures that leaders expect them to follow when recording and reporting these concerns. This leads to minor inconsistencies in the procedures that are followed. Additionally, leaders' actions, including how they record and report on concerns to governors, are sometimes not as robust as they should be.

The curriculum helps pupils to develop healthy relationships and to stay safe, including when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not given enough thought to children's school experiences in the early years. This means that children do not build the secure foundations of knowledge and behaviour needed for the next stage of their education. Leaders should finalise the design of the curriculum in the early years and ensure that children are well prepared for key stage 1.
- Leaders have not provided sufficient guidance on the processes to follow when raising a concern about a pupil's behaviour or welfare. At times, leaders' actions in response to concerns, including their recording of such actions, are not as strong as they should be. This means that leaders and governors miss opportunities to identify patterns in behaviour or safeguarding. Leaders should review the processes in place for recording, and responding to, any concerns about pupils' welfare.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 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.

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	105084
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10256153
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	232
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Brian Sharp
Headteacher	Nicola Turner
Website	http://www.ladymount.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Catholic school. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in July 2018.
- Leaders make use of one unregistered alternative provision.
- A separate nursery provider operates within the school building. The provider was not considered as part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- The inspector spoke with the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and archdiocese.
- The inspector checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. He looked at a range of documentation and spoke to leaders and staff. The inspector also spoke to pupils about whether they feel safe in school.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- The inspector listened to pupils read with a familiar adult.
- The inspector also spoke with leaders and pupils about the curriculum in a small number of other subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times. He spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. He also considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. He also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector spoke with parents and carers as they dropped their children off at school. He considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

David Spruce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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