

Inspection of St Werburgh's Catholic Primary School

Park Grove, Birkenhead, Merseyside CH41 2TD

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 September 2023

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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Parents and carers, staff and pupils speak positively about St Werburgh's Catholic Primary School. Staff know pupils and their families well. Staff provide support that enables pupils to feel safe and secure in school.

Pupils said that their school is a happy place to be. They warmly welcome new pupils who join the school at different times throughout the year. Pupils know why it is important to treat everyone with respect. For example, pupils explained to inspectors how 'everyone is special and everyone is unique'.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They speak with confidence about their enjoyment of different subjects. Pupils try their best, and they help others to do the same. Children in the early years quickly learn to follow the routines and expectations staff have of them. Pupils know what it means to be a good friend and they are kind and caring towards each other. For instance, older pupils relish their role as buddies for younger pupils at playtimes.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils strive to meet these expectations. Typically, current pupils learn the curriculum successfully, and they achieve well. However, historic weaknesses in the curriculum mean that the improvements in pupils' learning are not reflected in published information about pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 2.

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

The school has an ambitious curriculum in place that begins in the early years. It sets out the most important knowledge pupils need to know. In most subjects, the school has designed the curriculum so that pupils build securely on what they already know. However, in a small number of subjects, the school has not ordered learning to help pupils build their knowledge as well as they could. As a result, some pupils are hindered when they encounter new subject content.

The school has designed a well-thought-out programme of training for staff, including support for staff to develop their curriculum expertise. As a result, staff have secure subject knowledge. They explain new learning clearly to pupils and design activities that support pupils to acquire the knowledge that they need.

Children in the two-year-old provision and the Nursery Year benefit from the expertise of staff who understand how young children learn. For example, staff know when to guide learning and when to let children have a go for themselves. Across the school, staff design learning that captures pupils' interest and that encourages them to be inquisitive. Pupils show determination to work with independence. However, they are not afraid to ask for help if they need it.

In the main, the school has designed appropriate assessment systems that support teachers to check on how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. However,

from time to time, the school's strategies do not provide the most useful information about the knowledge that pupils can remember. On occasion, this hinders teachers when shaping future learning.

Children's love of reading flourishes in the early years where they learn a range of songs and rhymes off by heart. As soon as children join the school, they read well-chosen books that ignite their interest in reading. Pupils read books that contain the sounds that they know. This helps them to develop their fluency and confidence in reading.

Staff have a secure understanding of the school's approach to delivering phonics. They model sounds with accuracy. Staff identify those pupils who need extra help with their reading. Those pupils who find it hard to read receive the support that they need to catch up quickly. Pupils show interest in a range of authors. They said that the school's reading rewards encourage them to read widely and often.

The school ensures that staff are well equipped to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Staff adapt how they deliver the curriculum so that pupils with SEND learn well. For instance, staff break learning down into small steps and help these pupils secure important prior knowledge before moving on.

The school works closely with a range of specialists to help pupils to understand their emotions. Staff provide well-placed support for pupils who find this difficult. As a result, classrooms are calm and orderly. Learning is seldom disrupted.

Pupils have an in-depth understanding of fundamental British values. For example, they know that voting for school council members is an example of democracy. Pupils know why mutual respect is important. They value the opinions of others, even when they differ from their own. Pupils have a range of opportunities to develop their talents and interests such as learning musical instruments and taking part in performances.

Staff feel valued by leaders. The school, including governors, care about staff well-being. They consider staff workload while making decisions to improve the quality of education. Governors have the expertise to fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively.

Parents appreciate the nurture and care that the school provides for their children. Added to this, the school shares information with parents about how to support learning at home. Parents said that they found this guidance useful.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the school has not ensured that new learning is ordered as logically as it is in other subjects. This prevents some pupils from embarking on subsequent learning with confidence. The school should improve the order of subject content so that pupils know and remember more over time.
- In some subjects, the school's assessment strategies do not provide staff with the information that they require about how well pupils are learning. From time to time, this hinders how well staff design the next steps in pupils' learning. The school should ensure that its assessment systems provide staff with the information that they require to shape and adapt the curriculum in these subjects.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	105091
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10294211
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Keith Powell
Headteacher	Sarah Murphy
Website	www.stwerburghs.wirral.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs before-school provision on the school's site.
- The school offers provision for two-year-old children.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- This is a Roman Catholic school and is in the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2016. Its next section 48 inspection is due before 2024.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to the school about the curriculum in some other subjects. Inspectors heard some pupils read to a trusted adult.
- Inspectors spoke with school leaders, subject leaders, pupils, parents, governors, the school improvement partner and a representative of the local authority and of the diocese.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, as well as Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jane Dennis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Deborah Bailey

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