

# Inspection of St John's Catholic Infant School

Old Chester Road, Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside CH63 7LH

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Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 15 years ago and was judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

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

Pupils, and children in the early years, enjoy attending St John's Catholic Infant School. Pupils consistently meet the high expectations that the school sets for their achievement. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most pupils, and children in the early years, achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are exemplary. From the start of the early years, children learn to focus on each task and to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, during the inspection, children in the Reception Year were fully engrossed in a phonics matching game, and they waited patiently to take their turn.

Pupils in key stage 1 also give their full attention to lessons, and there is rarely any disruption. Pupils said that if there was an incident of misbehaviour, they trust adults to deal with it quickly. Pupils at this school are friendly, caring and respectful of others. They are happy.

The school enhances pupils' learning of the curriculum through carefully organised trips, visits and outdoor learning activities. For example, pupils in key stage 1 visit a local historical town as part of their history topic. These opportunities add considerable value to pupils' wider personal development.

Pupils benefit from learning how to take care of their physical and mental health. In addition to this, they embrace opportunities to take part in local community events. For example, pupils recently raised money for a local hospice.

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

The school has ensured that there is a broad and balanced curriculum offer from the Nursery Year to Year 2. Curriculums are ordered logically, and the school has given careful thought to the important knowledge that pupils should learn. This enables pupils to build securely on what they already know and can do.

By the end of the early years, children are ready for key stage 1. The school also works well with other local schools to ensure that Year 2 pupils have a smooth transition into the next stage of their education. Staff ensure that, by the end of their time at St John's Catholic Infant School, pupils are typically well prepared for the demands of key stage 2.

Overall, the school has ensured that staff are knowledgeable and confident to teach a broad range of subjects. In the main, teachers design learning activities that enable pupils to acquire essential knowledge and skills. However, from time to time, some teachers do not design the most appropriate activities to help pupils, and children in the early years, to learn new topics and concepts. On occasion, this hinders the depth of some pupils' learning and development.

The school's assessment systems are well designed and implemented by staff. Teachers are quick to address and to rectify any misconceptions or misunderstandings that pupils may have.

A love of reading permeates the school. Pupils were able to articulate their favourite stories to inspectors. Teachers have been suitably trained to deliver the phonics programme consistently well. Pupils practise reading using books that closely match the sounds they have learned. Teachers check carefully that pupils can remember previously learned sounds. Those pupils who find learning to read more challenging receive effective support to help them to keep up with the phonics programme. As a result, most pupils are confident and fluent readers by the end of Year 2.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. However, on occasion, some pupils who receive SEND support are not placed on the school's SEND register. Nevertheless, staff are skilled at adapting the delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND can learn well. The school also works well with pupils who require extra support to help them to catch up with any missed or forgotten learning.

Pupils, including children in the early years, behave exceptionally well. They are extremely well mannered, and they enjoy strong relationships with staff. Pupils demonstrate their commitment to learning. They are sensible and mature. Pupils are proud of their achievements.

The vast majority of pupils attend school every day. They are also punctual. Where there are any slight dips in pupils' rates of attendance, the school acts with rigour to intervene.

Pupils understand the need to respect people's differences. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and what makes a healthy friendship. Pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular clubs that are offered to nurture their wider talents and interests. For example, pupils enjoy coding, judo and French clubs.

Governors understand their statutory duties, and they fulfil their responsibilities well. They have a firm grasp of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Governors challenge and successfully hold the leadership team to account for the quality of education that pupils receive. They also support staff well-being effectively.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support that they receive from leaders to manage their workload and to look after their well-being. For example, staff are allocated time to carry out training and to work towards qualifications that will further strengthen their wider knowledge, skills and understanding.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- From time to time, some staff do not design learning activities consistently well. This hinders the depth to which some pupils, and children in the early years, learn new knowledge and skills. The school should ensure that staff are well trained to design learning activities that enable pupils, and children in the early years, to flourish.
- Some pupils who are receiving appropriate additional support for their learning and developmental needs are not placed on the SEND support register when they should be. This means that, at the end of Year 2, the schools that some pupils move on to are occasionally unaware that these pupils should receive SEND support. The school should ensure that all pupils who are receiving additional SEND support are recorded on the SEND register. This is to ensure that pupils' new schools are fully aware of the support that has already been provided.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105082
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	10226349
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	221
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Emily McArdle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mary Bulmer
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stjohnsinfantschool.co.uk">www.stjohnsinfantschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 and 26 February 2008

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character was on 8 July 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due by 2027.
- The governing body manages a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school makes use of alternative provision for a small number of pupils.

## 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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, and staff. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school improvement plan and documentation relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority. She also spoke with a representative of the Diocese of Shrewsbury and with the school's improvement partner.
- The lead inspector spoke with the headteacher of an alternative provider that the school uses.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of parents while pupils were arriving at school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Ruth Moran, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Valmai Roberts

Ofsted Inspector

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