

Inspection of St Michael’s Catholic Primary School

Guion Street, Off Boaler Street, Liverpool, Merseyside L6 9DU

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this welcoming school. From the moment that children join the early years, they are encouraged to follow the school's rules. From this point on, children and pupils are polite, respectful and gentle towards others. Pupils benefit from the kind and caring relationships that they have with staff and each other. This helps them to grow in confidence.

Pupils do their best to live up to the school's high expectations for their achievement. Pupils are eager to learn. They make the most of the learning opportunities that the school provides for them. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils enjoy the range of activities that are on offer beyond the academic curriculum. For example, they look forward to educational visits to places of interest. Pupils take part in a broad range of clubs, such as sports, choir and crochet clubs.

Pupils embrace the wide range of leadership opportunities available to them. For example, pupils who act as representatives of the school council take their roles seriously. They know that they can make a difference to the lives of others. Pupils understand that it is important to be diligent when they take on these extra responsibilities. They explained that these opportunities help to prepare them for life beyond school.

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

The school has successfully improved almost all aspects of its provision since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils now enjoy a good quality of education and their behaviour is impeccable and a credit to the staff and their parents and carers.

The school has designed a suitably broad and ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of pupils, including those with SEND, well. Across different subjects, the school has identified the key knowledge, including vocabulary, that pupils should learn and the order in which this content should be taught.

The school's validated published data for 2023 shows that the proportion of pupils who met the expected standards in reading at the end of Year 6 was below the national average. A high proportion of pupils in this year group joined the school at various stages throughout key stage 2. As a result, they were unable to benefit fully from the school's well-designed curriculum. Currently, most pupils achieve well across a range of subjects.

The school has provided high-quality training so that teachers can deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to explain new learning clearly to pupils. They have a secure understanding of what pupils must learn and they carefully design activities to meet the needs of pupils.

The school ensures that pupils with SEND have their additional needs identified quickly and accurately by well-trained staff. Staff receive appropriate training to enable them to adapt their delivery of the curriculum to meet these pupils' needs. This allows pupils with SEND to learn alongside their classmates successfully and to achieve well.

Children in the early years are introduced to the joys of stories, rhymes and song as soon as they enter the Nursery class. Staff carefully model the vocabulary that they want the children to know. However, children in the Reception classes have less opportunities to develop their language and deepen their learning, especially during their independent play. This means that during these times children do not learn as well as they could.

Reading sits at the heart of the curriculum. Reading areas in all classrooms and throughout school are warm and inviting spaces. Pupils benefit from access to carefully chosen high-quality books that expand their vocabulary and challenge their understanding. They said that they enjoy reading and know that it is an important skill for life.

Phonics begins as soon as children join the Reception classes. Well-trained staff deliver the phonics programme effectively. Pupils practise reading with books that are suitably matched to the sounds that they know. Most pupils quickly become confident and fluent readers. Those pupils who struggle to keep up with the phonics programme are given appropriate help by staff.

The school has designed a well-constructed programme to support pupils' wider development. Pupils understand how to keep themselves healthy, both physically and mentally. They also know how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures and understand that you should not discriminate because of race. However, some pupils have a limited knowledge of other forms of discrimination. They are also unclear about some of the fundamental British values. This means pupils are not as well prepared as they could be for life in modern Britain.

Routines for excellent behaviour start from the early years and continue throughout the school. Pupils move around school in a calm and orderly manner. They demonstrate exceedingly positive attitudes to their education and understand how this will help them in later life. They make sure that their behaviour does not disrupt their own learning or the learning of others. Their considerate behaviour and their love of learning contributes strongly to their academic success.

Attendance remains a high priority. The school does everything it possibly can to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. For example, it has taken effective action to reduce the number of pupils who are absent from school too often. As a result, the attendance of this group of pupils is improving strongly over time.

Governors work closely with the school to fully evaluate all aspects of the quality of education that pupils receive. They challenge and support the school effectively. The

school considers the workload and well-being of staff when making decisions about changes to the curriculum. For example, staff said that the refinements to the marking and feedback policy have had a positive impact in reducing their workload. As a result, staff feel well supported to carry out their roles effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Children in the Reception Year do not have enough opportunity to deepen their learning during independent play. This means that, from time to time, some children do not learn as much as they could. The school should support staff to recognise opportunities to extend children's thinking and understanding while they play and engage in different learning activities.
- Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge of modern British society. They are less aware of some of the fundamental British values and they do not know about different forms of discrimination. In these areas, they are less well prepared for life in modern Britain than they should be. The school should ensure that all pupils learn all that they need to know in readiness for the next stage of their lives.

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 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	104656
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10294193
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	453
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jeanette Riley
Headteacher	Alyson Rigby
Website	www.stmichaelscatholicprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in December 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection will take place before 2025.
- The school provides before- and after-school provision for its pupils.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision for 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 any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of governors. She also spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the archdiocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, and spoke to teachers and with some pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils reading with a familiar adult. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum with leaders in some other subjects.
- 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 at various times in the school day. This included during lessons as well as at lunchtime.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents and carers in their responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors spoke with parents as they brought their children to school at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Pat Speed, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Louise Finlay	Ofsted Inspector
Elaine Jackson	Ofsted Inspector

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