

Inspection of Cathcart Street Primary School

Dover Close, Birkenhead, Wirral, Merseyside CH41 3JY

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to attend this school and know that staff care about them. They like the way that their teachers are kind and friendly. Pupils enjoy contributing to school life. For example, the eco-committee recently won an award which provided funding to improve the playground for other pupils.

The school has not maintained a good quality of education over time. This means that many groups of pupils have underachieved. Previous turbulence in leadership contributed to this decline. However, the school is now more settled following changes in leadership. New subject curriculums are beginning to show promise. Pupils' attainment is beginning to improve. Nevertheless, there is still some work to do to improve pupils' experience at the school.

Until recently, rules, routines and expectations were not well established. In some classes, the school's expectations for behaviour are now higher. In these classes, pupils' attitudes to learning are more positive. This is particularly evident in the early years foundation stage (EYFS). However, expectations for pupils' behaviour are not consistently high across the school. This means that, occasionally, pupils cannot concentrate on their learning due to the behaviour of others.

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

Recent changes to the curriculum mean that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are starting to receive an improved quality of education. In the EYFS, the school has a clearly defined curriculum. This is consistently delivered by teachers from the provision for two-year-olds through to the end of Reception class. Children cooperate well together. They listen attentively to their teachers and are well prepared for learning in Year 1.

The school's previous curriculum was not clearly structured. It did not set out in sufficient detail the knowledge that pupils needed to learn. Many pupils therefore developed gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The curriculum is now more clearly structured. In an increasing number of subjects, the school has set out the knowledge that pupils need to learn. In these subjects, the school has well-understood assessment strategies. Often, teachers use these strategies well to check on pupils' understanding and to address any gaps in their learning.

That said, the school has not finalised its curriculum thinking in some subjects. As a result, teachers do not have a secure understanding of what pupils should learn and when they should learn it. From time to time, some important knowledge is not delivered as well as it could be. In addition, the activities and work that teachers set in these subjects occasionally do not support pupils' learning. Assessment strategies in these subjects are not as well thought out as in other subjects. In these subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils with SEND are identified early and support is put into place quickly. As a result, in the subjects which are more clearly defined, pupils with SEND are supported well to make progress through the curriculum.

There is a renewed focus on prioritising reading. Stories are shared regularly in the early years and across the school. Children in the early years get off to a strong start. They begin by learning different rhymes, songs and poems. The school ensures that staff receive effective training to aid them to deliver the phonics curriculum consistently. There are now fewer gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge. Pupils' ability to read age-appropriate texts is improving over time.

Attendance has been an important focus for the school. The school engages with parents and carers effectively. It has looked closely at the reasons why pupils in the past did not frequently come to school. The school has used this understanding to work with parents to ensure that pupils come to school more often. This is proving successful. Pupils' attendance is higher than in the past. The number of pupils who have missed a lot of school is diminishing.

Pupils have access to a wide range of extra-curricular clubs. This includes karate, football and chess club. They also get to explore their learning through educational visits, including to museums, local parks and the local football stadium. Pupils help to support their local community through raising money for charity. They learn about different religions, faiths and beliefs. Visitors come into school to help pupils with their understanding of these different religions.

Until recently, governors did not carry out their responsibilities as effectively as they should have. However, with new governors with a wide set of skills in place, this is beginning to change. Nevertheless, this is still at an early stage. Some of the systems to check on pupils' achievement still lack clarity and robustness. This impacts how well governors can challenge the school around pupils' achievement.

The school engages well with staff. It listens to their concerns around workload. This helps leaders to think carefully about how to implement new changes. This impacts positively on teaching as any change is well managed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Governors do not have robust systems in place to evaluate the impact of the school's work on pupils' achievement. This has meant that many pupils have underachieved over time. Governors should ensure that they improve their oversight of the school so that they can hold leaders to account for pupils' achievement.

- The school has not finalised its curriculum thinking in some subjects. This means that teachers are sometimes unclear about how to implement the curriculum as the school intends. In these subjects, teachers, at times, choose inappropriate activities that do not help pupils to learn well. The school should finalise its curriculum thinking in these subjects and ensure that teachers receive well-designed guidance to deliver the curriculum more consistently.
- The assessment strategies used in a handful of subjects are underdeveloped. Teachers do not accurately check on pupils' learning in these subjects. This means that gaps in pupils' learning are not addressed well enough. The school should develop its assessment approaches to ensure that teachers can identify how well pupils have learned and remembered the curriculum in all subjects.
- The school's expectations for pupils' behaviour are not consistently high enough. In some lessons and subjects, pupils do not display positive attitudes towards their learning. Now and then, this can interrupt other pupils' learning. The school should raise its expectations for pupils' behaviour and help them to develop more positive attitudes towards school.

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	105048
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10289880
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elizabeth Wynne
Headteacher	Lindsay Smith
Website	www.cathcartstreet.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- Several members of the governing body are new to role.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- The school does not make any use of alternative provision.

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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, design and technology and geography. For each deep dive, they

met with subject leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils and looked at pupils' work.

- Inspectors also discussed learning in other curriculum subjects with subject leaders and looked at pupils' work.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils in Year 1 to Year 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They met with the leaders for attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes and as pupils moved around the school building. They scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- 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 spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at the school. They spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of parents while pupils were arriving at school.
- Inspectors took account of 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 for pupils.

Inspection team

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Elaine Jackson	Ofsted Inspector
Moira Atkins	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024