

Inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Radnor Drive, Churchtown, Southport, Lancashire PR9 9RR

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

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

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 11 years ago and 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 really enjoy coming to St Patrick's School. Staff welcome pupils into their classrooms with a ready smile each day. These positive and caring relationships help pupils to feel happy and safe. Pupils said that 'school is like a second home'.

Pupils do their best to live up to the high expectations that the school sets for their achievement. They are enthusiastic and keen to learn. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

From the very start of their Reception year, routines and expectations for behaviour are firmly established. Pupils throughout school understand what is expected of them. School is a calm space where pupils are polite and courteous to each other and staff.

Pupils value the extensive range of opportunities on offer to develop their talents and interests such as football, gardening and art clubs. Older pupils understand that the range of leadership opportunities that they have help prepare them very well for the next stage of their educational journey. Pupils also relish involvement in wider initiatives such as the 'kNOw knife crime' campaign and representing the school in one of the many team events that take place during the year.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum that is well ordered and allows pupils to build on previous learning. Across most subjects, the school has identified the key knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn. However, in a small number of subjects, leaders are revising this content and order to ensure what pupils learn and when they should learn it is clearly determined.

The school has provided high-quality training for teachers to ensure that they can deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers have a secure understanding of what pupils should learn in the majority of subjects and activities are carefully designed to meet the needs of learners. Assessment information is used effectively to ensure pupils have a clear understanding of what has been taught. This allows them to build successfully on what they have learned before.

Any additional needs that pupils may have are identified quickly and accurately by well-trained staff. The school has provided additional training to staff to enable them to adapt the delivery of the curriculum so that they can meet these needs. As a result, pupils with SEND learn successfully alongside their peers.

The school prioritises early reading. Children begin to learn the sounds that letters represent from the very start of their Reception year. Staff are well trained in the teaching of phonics. Additional support is put in place promptly for pupils who may need it. As a result, most pupils learn to read accurately and with fluency by the end of Year 2.

The school also works to develop a love of reading across the school. The books that pupils read both enthuse and excite them. Pupils said that the books that they read as a class were 'inspiring and help us to learn new words'. Reading ambassadors support younger pupils in their reading by sharing stories with them.

The school has an exceptionally well-developed and carefully thought-through offer for pupils' wider development. Pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves both physically and mentally well. Well-being ambassadors, voted for by their class, offer support to fellow pupils who may need it.

Talents and interests are nurtured through a raft of different opportunities that the school provides. For instance, pupils take part in a variety of after-school activities such as dodgeball, eco-art and dance clubs. Visits and visitors support aspects of the curriculum and help learning come alive. Pupils talked confidently about how the law protects people with different characteristics.

School and eco-councillors contribute ideas and ensure that the pupil voice is heard. Class responsibilities are valued. Pupils realise that holding such responsibilities helps prepare them for later life.

The school places a high priority on attendance and punctuality. It reviews pupils' rates of attendance daily and quickly identifies and provides support for those who may need it. As a result, attendance rates for this small group of pupils show improvement.

Governors understand their strategic role and have a good understanding of the quality of education on offer. They hold the school to account effectively for the outcomes of its pupils. Governors know their school well.

The school has adopted a measured approach to change. It considers the impact on workload and well-being of staff in the decisions it takes. For example, the changes to marking and feedback policy have had a positive impact on workload. Staff also appreciate any additional time they receive to complete tasks allocated to them. They feel valued and are proud to be part of the 'St Patrick's family'. This is a view echoed by the vast majority of parents and carers who hold the school in high regard.

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, curriculum content is not defined as clearly as it needs to be. This hinders pupils from progressing through the curriculum as well

as they could. The school should ensure it continues to redefine the knowledge and skills it wants pupils to know in these subjects so that pupils are able to build on what they have already learned.

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	104918
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10313962
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	342
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tom O'Malley
Headteacher	Rachel Halsall
Website	www.stpatrickschurchtown.com
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 March 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- A new headteacher and chair of governors have been appointed since the last inspection.
- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in June 2013. The school's next section 48 inspection will take place before end of July 2025.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

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 held meetings with the headteacher and other members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with representatives of the archdiocese and the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics science, history and art and design. 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 another subject.
- 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 playtime and 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 questionnaires for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Pat Speed, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lee Comber

Ofsted Inspector

Tim Sherriff

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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