

Inspection of Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School

Seaforth, Kepler Street, Select, Merseyside L21 3TE

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2024

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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy learning and playing at this nurturing school. Adults and pupils make sure that everyone feels welcome, respected and valued. Pupils said that staff look after them well. They know that there are adults in the school who will listen to their concerns. Pupils who arrive from other countries quickly feel safe, make friends and play a full part in the life of the school. The school expects all pupils to work hard and achieve well. Most pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well in most subjects.

Pupils' positive behaviour starts in the early years. Children gradually learn to listen, follow instructions, share and take turns. In lessons and at social times, pupils live out the school's values, including those of respect and kindness. They help each other and behave well. They enjoy each other's company.

Pupils take full advantage of the many opportunities that the school provides for their personal development. They attend a wide range of clubs that staff organise for them at lunchtimes and after school, including drama, gardening and many sports. They relish responsibilities such as taking on the role of well-being ambassadors and representing their class on the eco-council. Visits by local people from a variety of professions contribute to the development of pupils' determination to aim high in life.

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

The school has devised an ambitious curriculum which is bespoke to the school. It sets out clearly what pupils need to learn in each subject at each stage of their education. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a dip in pupils' attainment and progress in some subjects. In response, the school made revisions to the curriculum. These changes have had a positive impact on pupils' achievement, including in mathematics.

Teachers have strong knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They carefully choose activities which help pupils to learn well. Staff regularly revisit learning so that pupils remember it and can build on their knowledge when introduced to something new. Staff frequently check what pupils know and remember. They adapt future teaching to address gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Reading is very important in this school. Pupils are enthusiastic about the many ways in which the school encourages them to enjoy reading. They excitedly explained that when a bell rings at different times during the day, they can 'drop everything and read'.

Staff ensure that children in the early years steadily increase their skills, including listening and speaking, often from low starting points. Children have fun listening to stories and rhymes and learning about the sounds that letters make. These activities

help them when they begin to follow the school's well-devised phonics programme from the start of the Reception Year.

Staff have undertaken considerable training in early reading. They help pupils who struggle. For some pupils this works well. However, although most staff implement the phonics programme very effectively, a minority sometimes do not use the school's agreed approach or vocabulary. This inconsistency contributes to some pupils not becoming fluent and accurate readers by the start of key stage 2.

The school quickly identifies the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff use this information to plan the help and resources that these pupils need to successfully follow the same curriculum as their peers. The school ensures that pupils with SEND enjoy taking part in all aspects of school life.

Staff ensure that the school is calm and orderly during lessons and at social times. Nearly all pupils listen attentively and remain engrossed in their learning. Some pupils have needs which make it hard for them to follow rules and concentrate. Skilled staff patiently help them to learn alongside their peers.

The school prioritises working with pupils, families and external agencies to promote good attendance. However, since the COVID-19 pandemic, attendance has deteriorated. Too many pupils miss too much important learning and wider opportunities for development.

The school provides pupils with very strong opportunities for personal development. Pupils embrace difference. They enjoy celebrating the increasingly wide range of cultures represented in the school. They learn to put themselves in the shoes of those less fortunate than themselves. They support global and local charities. They are very aware of the responsibilities that come with 'living sustainably and in solidarity with the poor'.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They said that the school values their hard work and takes into account their workload when making changes. The school makes sure that parents and carers are involved in their children's learning, including by organising reading workshops. Governors know the school very well. With considerable changes to staffing and leadership this year, they have ensured stability and maintained a strong focus on the quality of education that the school provides.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A minority of teaching staff do not consistently use the school's agreed approaches to the implementation of the phonics programme, including agreed

terminology. As a result, some pupils become confused and take longer than they should to increase and use their phonics knowledge. The school should ensure that all those who teach early reading use agreed language and activities so that more pupils reach the standard appropriate for their age.

- Too many pupils are too frequently absent from school. As a result, they miss important learning and opportunities for personal development. The school should strengthen strategies to improve attendance so that all pupils benefit fully from the education and experiences that the school provides.

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	104929
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10321254
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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anne-Marie Grant
Headteacher	Claire Roberts
Website	www.ourlady-starofthesea.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary-aided school in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in March 2023. The next is due in 2029.
- The school uses one registered 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.
- 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 had discussions with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team.
- An inspector held a meeting with governors, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector had a discussion with a representative of the local authority and a school improvement partner provided for the school jointly by the local authority and the archdiocese.
- An inspector had a discussion with a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. As part of this process, they had discussions with subject leaders, visited lessons, had discussions with pupils, listened to pupils reading and looked at their work in books. They also scrutinised the curriculum in other subject areas.
- An inspector had a discussion with the special educational needs coordinator to help evaluate provision and practice for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors had discussions with groups of pupils about their experience of school. They also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. An inspector had discussions with parents as they brought their children to school in the morning.
- As there were no responses to either the Ofsted staff or pupil surveys, inspectors scrutinised the responses of pupils and staff to school surveys which used similar questions. An inspector spoke to a cross-section of staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Liz Kelly, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sandra Hamilton

Ofsted Inspector

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