

# Inspection of St Robert Bellarmine Catholic Primary School

Harris Drive, Bootle, Merseyside L20 6ED

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Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

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

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since March 2012.

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

Pupils flourish in this happy and welcoming school, where everyone is expected to achieve their absolute best. Pupils enjoy incredibly strong relationships with staff that are built on mutual respect.

The school has the highest of expectations for all pupils' academic achievement, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All pupils benefit from the school's highly ambitious curriculum. Pupils achieve exceptionally well. They have a real passion for learning.

The school is a calm and purposeful place. As soon as children begin in the Nursery class, routines to promote high standards of behaviour are firmly established. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is exemplary. They are well mannered, kind and courteous to staff and to each other.

Pupils benefit from an impressive range of activities designed to cultivate their talents and interests, such as pop club, football, art and computing. Opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills, for example as prefects, sports champions or members of the very active pupil council, are equally extensive. Pupils are especially proud of the work that they do to support local charities, including the children's hospice and the food bank.

At this school, there is something for everyone to enjoy. For example, the careers afternoon inspires older pupils to consider their futures. Pupils have high aspirations and they are determined to excel in everything that they do.

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

Dedicated staff share a strong commitment to ensuring that pupils achieve academic excellence. Together with leaders at all levels, staff have crafted an exceptionally rich curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. In each subject, the school has clearly identified the knowledge that pupils should learn and when they should learn it.

The school has provided high-quality training that has enabled teachers to become experts in the subjects that they teach. As a result, teachers deliver curriculums with confidence and great skill. Assessment information is used extremely well to accurately pinpoint any misconceptions that pupils may have. These misconceptions are addressed rapidly. This allows pupils to successfully build a rich bank of subject knowledge that they confidently apply within and across subjects.

The school swiftly identifies the needs of pupils with SEND. Adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum, when needed, allow pupils with SEND to learn the same content as their peers. Pupils across the school, including those with SEND, achieve exceedingly well. They are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school places great importance on the teaching of reading. This work begins in the Nursery class where children take great delight in listening to and sharing stories and rhymes. Children in the Reception Year quickly learn the sounds that letters represent. The school has ensured that staff have developed their expertise in teaching phonics in the early years and across key stage 1. Pupils, including those with SEND, receive the targeted help that they need if they find reading difficult. This ensures that they keep pace with the phonics programme. Pupils read books that match the sounds that they already know. This helps them to become confident, fluent readers who fully understand what they have read.

The school's 'reading graduate programme' successfully encourages older pupils to read an extensive range of high-quality texts. They enjoy collecting points for every book that they read. Pupils value receiving their highly sought after 'graduate badges' in recognition of their strong reading habits.

Ensuring that pupils attend school is a high priority. The school's effective systems to track pupils' attendance enable it to quickly identify any pupils and families who may need further support. Attendance rates across the school are high. Pupils' attitudes to learning are such that no time is wasted and lessons are very rarely disrupted. This enables pupils to focus diligently on their studies and to excel.

The curriculum to support pupils' personal development is highly aspirational and extremely well thought through. Pupils show a deep understanding of fundamental British values. For example, they spoke in great depth about how such values impact upon life in modern Britain. Pupils are extremely considerate of the views and beliefs of others. They celebrate differences and understand that everyone should be treated with respect. Pupils also understand how to keep physically and mentally healthy, as well as how to behave and keep safe online.

Governors fulfil their roles with dedication. The school and governors have a clear, shared vision. They are committed to ensuring that all pupils benefit from the highest quality educational experience. This provides pupils with a great start in life.

Staff are proud to work in this school. They value the considerations given to their workload and well-being when changes, such as the introduction of new policies and procedures, are introduced. The vast majority of parents and carers hold the school in the highest regard.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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>	104906
<b>Local authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10294203
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	238
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Anne-Marie Pennington
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mairead O'Neill Dowell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.strobertbellarmine.co.uk">www.strobertbellarmine.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 and 13 March 2012, 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 March 2024. The school's next section 48 inspection will take place before the end of 2029.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school runs a breakfast club 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 the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this 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 local authority and the archdiocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, considered samples of pupils' work and spoke to some pupils about their learning.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also viewed curriculum documents and samples of pupils' work in 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 playtime, lunchtime and at breakfast club.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents 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

Stephanie Swift

Ofsted Inspector

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