

Inspection of St Richard's Catholic Primary School, Skelmersdale

Sandy Lane, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 8LQ

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness 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 June 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Richard's Catholic Primary School is a calm and welcoming place. Pupils enjoy learning and spending their social time together. They learn how to be patient and kind. Pupils develop positive relationships with each other and with staff. They are keen to make the most of the wide range of opportunities that are on offer at school.

Pupils are proud of their many leadership roles. They carry these out with enthusiasm. For example, older pupils act as buddies and prefects at lunchtimes for younger pupils. Some pupils organise clubs and other activities for the rest of the school and the wider community, such as 'star' bakers, Minnie Vinnies and clubs that reflect pupils' interests.

The school has high expectations of all pupils. Staff understand pupils' differing needs and provide carefully tailored support to help them overcome any difficulties that they might face. This is particularly true for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils grow in confidence as they progress through the school. Most achieve well.

Most pupils focus well during lessons. Those who struggle to constantly meet the schools' high standards of behaviour value the support and encouragement they receive. Pupils are polite and considerate as they move around the school.

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

The curriculum is ambitious and well organised. Since the previous inspection, the school has focused on ensuring that the curriculum defines what all pupils need to learn to be ready for their next stages of education. As a result, teachers from the Nursery Year to Year 6 know precisely what to focus on with their classes.

Teaching staff are well trained. They use effective and consistent approaches when delivering the curriculum. For example, teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to practise and recall their prior learning. Established routines such as these help pupils to build up their knowledge more effectively.

Most subject curriculums are well established and support pupils' achievement. However, in a small number of subjects, revised curriculums have only recently been implemented. In these areas, it is too soon to see how effectively pupils are building up their knowledge.

In a minority of subjects, teachers do not check carefully enough that all pupils have learned what they need to. This sometimes includes pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. When this happens, some pupils' learning is not as secure as it could be.

Reading is a high priority at the school. Teachers make sure that children quickly become familiar with the relationship between sounds and letters in the early years. The songs, rhymes and stories that staff share with children in both the Nursery and Reception Years provide a firm foundation for this. Pupils enjoy times when they can read books that they

have chosen themselves. They appreciate and make good use of the well-stocked and enticing library areas in the school.

Children begin to learn how to read words using phonics in the Reception Year. The school ensures that pupils practise the sounds that they have learned with books that contain them. Pupils who struggle with reading benefit from regular additional support from skilled staff. Most pupils can read accurately and fluently by the end of key stage 1. This helps them to access the rest of the curriculum.

The school makes sure that all staff are well trained to accurately identify pupils who may have SEND. As a result, teachers choose suitable and effective approaches for these pupils' learning. Pupils with SEND achieve well because they benefit from the ambitious curriculum that the school provides.

Most pupils typically demonstrate positive attitudes to school and to their learning. Most pupils attend regularly. This helps them to achieve as well as they can. The school provides effective support for families where attendance is a concern.

The school provides a wide range of high-quality opportunities for pupils' personal development. Pupils benefit from learning about how to keep physically and mentally well. They also learn about developing healthy and positive relationships. Pupils develop confidence in expressing their own opinion and respecting the views of others. Their learning in this area prepares them well for later life.

The school is a harmonious community. Governors provide effective support and challenge to the school to ensure that all pupils receive the support that they need to achieve as well as they can. Governors ensure that staff workload is not compromised when new initiatives are introduced.

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, including reading, there is variability in the rigour in which the school identifies and addresses gaps in pupils' knowledge. This means that at times, some pupils do not build up their knowledge as quickly or as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers support all pupils to build up a secure body of knowledge across the curriculum.

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	119684
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10337672
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	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ann Naylor
Headteacher	Jennifer Jackson
Website	www.st-richards.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 and 26 June 2013 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection. There have also been a number of changes to other leadership roles during this time.
- There is a new chair of governors in post since the last inspection.
- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in January 2019. The next inspection is expected to take place within the next year.
- The school does not 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's educational provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school. An inspector also spoke with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the archdiocese and of the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. They spoke with the leaders of these areas of the curriculum. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes and when they moved around the school. An inspector scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and carers as they dropped their children off at school. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, to analyse. However, inspectors considered parents' free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- There were no responses to the online survey for pupils. However, inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sandra Hamilton

Ofsted Inspector

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