

Inspection of St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Tithebarn Road, Knowsley, Prescot, Merseyside L34 0HA

Inspection dates:	15 and 16 October 2024
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?

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils are encouraged and supported to be the best that they can be. Staff instil self-belief into pupils. Pupils achieve well.

Pupils respect the school's rules. They conduct themselves sensibly. In lessons, pupils are attentive. Weekly circle time helps pupils to understand their feelings. At social times, pupils play together harmoniously. They use kind words towards each other. Children in the early years get off to a flying start. They learn quickly to follow the school's routines. For instance, children in the Nursery class gladly tidy up at the end of the day. Pupils are happy in school.

Pupils learn how to be active citizens. For example, Year 6 'Fisher friends' help children to settle into the Reception class. Pupils are keen to carry out charitable works such as collecting food for a local foodbank. Many of them, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), represent the school at sporting events. 'Shining lights' are voted for by their class to represent them. They have helped to design a prayer garden. Play leaders support pupils to be active. Pupils embrace the myriad of opportunities to help one another.

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

The school has designed an ambitious and logically ordered curriculum. It has thought carefully about how pupils' learning should progress from early years to Year 6. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to explain ideas clearly. Teachers mostly choose activities that are matched to the curriculum aims. However, on occasion, teachers choose activities that do not help pupils to practise and consolidate their learning. Furthermore, teachers do not always check if pupils have learned the essential knowledge. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge. They struggle to recall learning over time and to connect new ideas with prior learning.

The school has provided staff with appropriate guidance to be able to identify pupils' additional needs well. Staff successfully employ the training that they have received to support pupils with SEND to learn effectively across a range of subjects. Typically, these pupils achieve well.

Pupils enjoy reading a wide variety of books. Children in the Nursery class enjoy reciting their favourite rhymes and joining in with familiar stories. This helps them to get ready to learn phonics in the Reception class. Staff are well trained to deliver the phonics programme. They quickly recognise pupils who struggle with reading. Effective support is put in place for these pupils to catch up with the phonics programme. Pupils quickly become confident and fluent readers.

Staff do not tolerate low-level disruption. As a result, pupils' learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. On those rare occasions when pupils do not conduct themselves as well as the school expects, staff seek to understand what this behaviour is communicating.

The restorative approach to behaviour helps pupils to consider the impact of their actions and behaviour so that they can learn to make better choices in the future. Children in the early years are taught how to take turns and share.

Some aspects of the school's personal development programme are strong. Pupils understand how to keep themselves healthy. They know which foods are nutritious. Pupils practise mindfulness techniques to help their mental health. The school ensures that pupils learn to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For instance, they learn about road, railway and online safety. However, some aspects of the personal, social and health education curriculum are underdeveloped. The school has not clearly defined what pupils should learn about the protected characteristics or fundamental British values. This makes it difficult for teachers to emphasise this information when they design learning activities. Some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge around British values and protected characteristics. They are not prepared as well as they could be for life in modern Britain.

The governing body has developed its skills and knowledge. It understands its role in holding the school to account. Governors have walked the journey of improvement with the school. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working in the school. They appreciate the ways in which the school has been mindful of their workload while changes have been made to the curriculum. For instance, phase and subject leaders are given time to carry out their responsibilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not check that pupils have learned the most important knowledge identified in the curriculum. This means that, in these subjects, some pupils do not develop a secure understanding over time. The school should ensure that teachers use assessment strategies effectively to check that pupils have learned this knowledge.
- The school does not ensure that pupils have a sufficiently deep understanding of fundamental British values or the protected characteristics. Pupils cannot articulate the importance of this learning or why it makes a difference to everyday life. The school should ensure that there is clarity about when and how pupils will learn about fundamental British values and protected characteristics, so that pupils are prepared fully for life in modern Britain.

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	104476
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10347882
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	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sue Orme
Headteacher	Claire Lewis
Website	www.stjohnfisherprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and chair of governors have been appointed.
- This Roman Catholic School is in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was in March 2024. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place between September 2028 and August 2029.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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 evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff about the work of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils’ work in other subjects.
- An inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar member of staff. Inspectors spoke with some pupils about reading.
- An inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the archdiocese, the school improvement partner and 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 observed behaviour at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with pupils to ask about their experiences of school. They also considered the responses to Ofsted’s survey for pupils.
- Inspectors met with several groups of staff. They also considered the responses to Ofsted’s survey for staff.
- Inspectors met with some parents at the start of the school day. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Jenny Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Peter Berry

Ofsted Inspector

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