

Inspection of St Alban's Catholic Primary School

Ashburton Road, Wallasey, Merseyside CH44 5XB

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?

Pupils benefit from a calm school environment where staff know them well. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They like to see their friends and they enjoy learning new things.

Pupils behave well around school. They are polite and courteous to staff, visitors and one another. At breaktime, they enjoy playing with their friends. Relationships between staff and pupils are secure. Pupils know that they are well cared for. Pupils said that they treat everyone equally and they know who to tell if they have a worry.

The school has high expectations of pupils' learning. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). By the end of key stage 2, pupils leave ready to start their secondary education.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to develop their interests and talents. They attend clubs, such as book club, cricket and tennis. Pupils enjoy making a positive contribution beyond the school. For example, pupils performed a drama at a local community festival and enjoyed taking part in a fun run to raise money for a local hospice. In addition, pupils develop their leadership skills through a range of roles such as school councillors, librarians and play leaders.

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

Leaders and governors have been successful in ensuring that pupils in this school can enjoy a good quality of education. Pupils learn in an environment that is free from poor behaviour. They emerge as well-rounded young people who are ready for the next stage of their education.

Reading has a high priority throughout the school. The phonics programme starts swiftly in the Reception class. By the end of key stage 1, most pupils are successful in learning to read. Those pupils who struggle to keep up with their peers get the help that they need to catch up from well-trained staff. Older pupils can talk about the books that they enjoy. By the time that pupils leave Year 6, they are fluent and accurate readers. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading.

That said, younger pupils who are learning phonics do not have enough opportunity to practise the sounds and letters that they know in their writing. This means that they are not as well prepared for the demands of the key stage 2 writing curriculum as they should be.

The subject curriculums are new. They are ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. The school has thought carefully about the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. This ensures that teachers have the information that they need to teach the curriculum as intended. Starting in early years, children and pupils build on what they already know as they progress through the curriculum. In most subjects, regular checks ensure that staff know how well pupils are learning. Staff skilfully intervene to address gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge as they arise. In a small number of

subjects, some pupils find it difficult to remember some of their prior learning from the previous curriculums. This means that they are not as ready as they should be to move on to new knowledge.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND accurately. These pupils receive the help and support that they need. In class, staff adapt their delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND are able to learn alongside their peers. As a result, pupils with SEND are successful in their learning.

The school has a varied programme to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils learn how to be healthy and stay safe, including online. Pupils enjoy a range of visits, such as to the theatre, the zoo and a local university. Year 6 pupils relish the opportunity to go on a residential trip to the Lake District. Pupils are encouraged to develop their confidence, for example through performing at a local theatre. Despite these opportunities, some pupils are not as well prepared as they might be for life in modern Britain. They have not gained a strong enough understanding of British values, protected characteristics or world religions.

Pupils behave well in lessons. Their attitudes to learning are positive. They listen to their teachers and try their best. They ask questions and help one another when their work gets tricky. When working together, pupils take account of each other's views. Pupils who struggle with their behaviour are given the support that they need.

Governors know the school well. They support staff through periods of change and are considerate of staff's workload and well-being. For example, the school's new approach to marking has made this task more manageable for staff. Staff enjoy working at the school and feel well supported in their roles. They appreciate the time that they are given to complete additional tasks.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils who are at the early stages of reading to practise the letters and sounds that they have learned in their writing. This hinders some pupils' writing fluency as they move into the key stage 2 curriculum. The school should provide regular opportunities for these pupils to practise transcription so that they can become fluent and confident writers.
- In a small number of subjects, some pupils have gaps in important knowledge which have not been identified. These gaps were due to weaknesses in the previous curriculums. This means that, on occasion, pupils are introduced to new learning without their prior knowledge being secure. This hinders them from learning all that

they could. The school should ensure that gaps in pupils' learning are identified and addressed so that new knowledge and skills can build securely.

- Some aspects of pupils' wider development are not secure. This is because of weaknesses in the previous curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE). This means that some pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be. The school should ensure that pupils gain a deeper knowledge of fundamental British values, protected characteristics and world religions so that they are ready for their next steps.

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	105072
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10347861
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kevin Doogan
Headteacher	John McDonald
Website	www.stalbans.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. Its last section 48 inspection, for schools with a religious character, took place in January 2023. The next inspection is scheduled to take place by the end of the summer term 2028.
- The school has a breakfast and after-school provision.
- 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.
- 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, art and design and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a sample of pupils’ work, spoke with teachers and talked with pupils about their learning.
- An inspector observed some pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. An inspector also met with members of the governing body. This included the chair of governors.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour as they arrived at school and during lessons and breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their views of school life.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers. This included the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted’s online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

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