

Inspection of a good school: St Jerome's Catholic Primary School

Greenloons Drive, Formby, Liverpool, Merseyside L37 2LX

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2023

Outcome

St Jerome's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this welcoming school. They benefit from positive relationships with each other and with staff. Pupils told the inspector that they trust that staff will help them if they have any concerns or worries. This helps to make them feel safe at school. Leaders have effective systems in place to identify bullying. If bullying should happen, leaders deal with it quickly.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to be successful both academically and to develop as well-rounded individuals. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well in many subjects.

Pupils benefit from a range of leadership responsibilities in the school. For example, older pupils take pride in being reading ambassadors. They encourage younger pupils to read for pleasure. Members of the school council organise fundraising activities that benefit local and international charities. These opportunities help to develop pupils' character, including their self-confidence and empathy.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Many pupils are keen to live up to these expectations. They are polite and well mannered. Pupils strive to embody the school mission statement of respecting everybody in their community.

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

Leaders have constructed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. Across the majority of the curriculum, the key knowledge that pupils should acquire is carefully organised from the early years to Year 6. This enables pupils to achieve well overall. However, by the end of Year 6, in 2022, pupils did not attain as well as other pupils nationally in writing. Leaders have identified and acted upon the weaknesses in the curriculum that caused this to happen. As a result, teachers are more alert to gaps in pupils' writing knowledge now and spend more time revisiting prior learning to make sure that this knowledge is secure.

In some subjects, leaders have recently revised the curriculum. In the main, these new curriculums are well thought out. However, in a very small number of subjects, leaders have not considered how some of pupils' learning builds on what they have previously been taught. Consequently, on occasion, some pupils do not deepen their knowledge as well as they should.

In most subjects, teachers check on what pupils know and remember over time. They are aware of the key knowledge that pupils must be confident with before moving on to new concepts. When needed, teachers provide pupils with the opportunity to revisit previous learning. Leaders provide ongoing training which helps teachers to design learning activities that enable pupils to build a deep body of knowledge over time.

In the majority of subjects, leaders check that teachers follow the guidance they have set out for teaching the curriculum. That said, in a small number of subjects, leaders have not assured themselves that the curriculum is being taught as intended by all teachers. Some teachers do not teach all of the specific knowledge set out in the curriculum as specified by leaders. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Children in the Reception Year begin the phonics programme as soon as they start school. Leaders ensure that pupils in key stage 1 continue to develop a deep body of knowledge in phonics. Pupils quickly learn the sounds that letters represent. Staff monitor pupils' understanding of phonics closely. There is timely extra support for those pupils who need it. This helps these pupils to catch up with their peers.

Leaders promote reading well across the school. Pupils in key stage 1 read books which are closely matched to the sounds that they have learned. This helps them to experience the enjoyment that comes from reading a book. Pupils in key stage 2 access a range of engaging texts that include novels and non-fiction. They read widely and often.

Leaders have effective systems to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders work well with external organisations to secure specialist advice and support when needed. Leaders ensure that staff adapt teaching well to meet the different needs of pupils with SEND across the school. These pupils access the same curriculum alongside their peers.

Pupils behave well and are attentive in lessons. This allows pupils to focus on the learning activities that the teachers provide. Children in the Reception Year cooperate well with their peers and are keen to follow the instructions of adults.

Pupils experience a range of opportunities that prepare them well for life in modern Britain. Leaders ensure that pupils understand what makes a healthy relationship. Pupils know that there are many different family structures. They are clear that everyone should be treated with respect regardless of their differences. Pupils benefit from opportunities to develop their talents and interests through clubs such as dodgeball and sewing.

Governors support and challenge leaders well. Leaders are considerate of staff's workload and well-being when making decisions about policies and procedures. Staff are highly positive about working at the school and value the support that they receive from leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are trained well to spot signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff understand the procedures that they must follow to report any concerns that they have about a pupil. Leaders respond to safeguarding concerns in a timely manner. They work effectively with external agencies when needed, to ensure that pupils and their families get the extra support that they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online. They understand the importance of not sharing personal information. Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn about road safety and other hazards outside of school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a very small number of subjects, leaders have not fully considered how some of the key knowledge that pupils learn builds on what they have already been taught. Consequently, pupils do not deepen some of their subject knowledge as well as they should. In these subjects, leaders should ensure that the curriculum builds securely on what pupils already know and can do.
- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not assured themselves that the curriculum is being delivered as intended. Some teachers do not teach all of the specific knowledge set out in the curriculum as specified by leaders. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers follow their guidance to teach the essential knowledge in the curriculum as intended.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2013.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	104938
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10283634
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	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Howard Goatley
Headteacher	Kathryn Monaghan
Website	www.st-jeromes.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Liverpool. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in January 2019.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken this into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector completed deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. As part of the deep dives, the inspector met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, met with teachers and looked at children's and pupils' work. He also looked at the curriculum and pupils' work in some other subjects. He listened to pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.

- The inspector spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the vice-chair of governors. He also spoke with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspector checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. He reviewed a range of documentation and spoke to leaders and staff. He also spoke to pupils about whether they felt safe in school.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons. He spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. He also considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. He also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.

Inspection team

David Robinson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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