

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

Copy Lane, Netherton, Bootle, Merseyside L30 7PG

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 July 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff strive to realise the school aim of 'Working together to bring about a welcoming atmosphere'. Pupils told the inspector that they value the strong relationships that they have with their friends and with the staff. This helps them to feel happy and safe at school.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to succeed academically. Pupils make the most of the learning opportunities that leaders and teachers provide for them. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They apply the behaviour policy consistently well. Pupils behave well around the school. Many pupils try to treat others in the same way that they would like to be treated themselves. If bullying does occur, leaders deal with it quickly.

Pupils learn the importance of teamwork and responsibility through being members of different groups, such as the eco and school councils. Pupils take part in a range of community activities, such as visiting the residents of the local elderly care home. These opportunities build pupils' understanding of empathy and what it means to make a positive contribution to society.

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

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. Across the curriculum, from the early years to Year 6, leaders have carefully identified the key knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which this should be taught. Overall, many pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well.

Teachers have benefited from high-quality subject-specific training. In most subjects, teachers check on what pupils know and remember from previous lessons. They devise appropriate lesson activities that help pupils make sense of new learning. However, in a

very small number of subjects, leaders have recently introduced a new curriculum. These new subject curriculums are ambitious and identify the important knowledge that pupils should learn. Nevertheless, leaders have not ensured that teachers identify and address the gaps in subject knowledge that some pupils have as a result of the previous weaker curriculums. Consequently, these pupils struggle to make sense of new learning.

Leaders have ensured that reading sits at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils across the school regularly experience the pleasure that comes from reading a book. Well-trained staff teach the phonics programme effectively. Pupils quickly learn the sounds that letters represent. Leaders and teachers regularly check what pupils know and quickly provide extra support for those who need it. This helps these pupils to keep up with their peers. The books that pupils read closely match the sounds that they have learned. Many pupils become fluent and confident readers by the end of key stage 1.

Leaders have effective systems in place to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Staff have benefited from the training that they have received. Teachers use effective approaches that enable pupils with SEND to follow the same curriculum as their classmates. Many pupils with SEND achieve well.

Children in the early years understand the school rules and routines. For example, they listen carefully to staff and cooperate well with their classmates. Most pupils are attentive in lessons and keen to learn. Pupils said that leaders have high expectations of behaviour. Across the school, most lessons proceed without disruption. This allows pupils to focus on the learning activities that the teachers provide. However, some pupils are too often absent from school. This has a negative impact on how well they learn.

Leaders have carefully selected opportunities to enhance pupils' wider development. Pupils understand that there are many different types of families in society. They are clear that they should treat everyone with respect, regardless of their differences. Pupils benefit from opportunities to develop their talents and interests through attending clubs such as cricket, science and football.

Governors support and challenge leaders well to improve the quality of education. 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. They value the support that they receive from leaders to enable them to do their jobs well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have frequent safeguarding training. This helps staff to understand their roles and responsibilities. Staff follow clear procedures 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 to help vulnerable pupils and their families access any additional support that they may need.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn about the dangers that they may face outside of school. For example, pupils recognise what they should do to cross the road safely and the risks associated with fire. Pupils learn how to protect themselves from harm when working and playing online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a very small number of subjects, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. These pupils struggle to make sense of new learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers identify and address gaps in pupils' learning before teaching new concepts.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This limits how well they learn. Leaders should work with these pupils and their families to improve pupils' attendance so that they can benefit from the good quality of education that the school provides.

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 June 2014.

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	135085
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10283643
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	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kath Sullivan
Headteacher	Michael Phillips
Website	www.stbenedictsprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Liverpool. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2023.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The governing body operates a breakfast club.

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 geography. As part of the deep dives, the inspector met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, met with teachers and looked at pupils' work. The inspector also looked at the curriculum and pupils' work in some other subjects. The inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.

- The inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the 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 with leaders and staff. He also spoke with 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 pupils' 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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