

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Wallasey

Wheatland Lane, Wallasey, Merseyside CH44 7ED

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this nurturing school. Children in the early years, along with pupils who are new to school, are given a warm welcome. They settle into school life quickly.

The school has high aspirations for pupils' achievement. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), work hard to rise to these aspirations. Current pupils, and children in the early years, typically achieve well.

During lessons and at social times, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils build incredibly positive relationships with one another and with staff. Pupils listen attentively and show respect. Classrooms buzz with purposeful learning. Pupils encourage each other to be the best that they can be and to follow the school's mission of 'loving one another'.

Pupils participate fully in school life. For instance, the school provides an extensive variety of sports and musical activities. It ensures that pupils have the chance to seize every opportunity to learn something new. Pupils are excited to attend the daily trampoline club where they can burn off energy and earn badges of achievement. Pupils are proud of their well-being responsibilities through which they play an active role in looking after other children. The pupils proudly showcased the school's well-being dance, 'Joey's Jingle', to inspectors.

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

The school has established an ambitious vision for the high-quality education that it provides for pupils. The governing board challenges and supports the work of the school well. This has helped to improve the quality of education that the school offers.

From the beginning of the early years to the end of Year 6, the school has designed a broad, rich and ambitious curriculum. The school has thought carefully about the knowledge that pupils should learn. This enables staff to know the important building blocks of information that pupils need to know and remember.

In some areas of the curriculum, the school effectively checks what pupils know. The additional needs of pupils with SEND are identified early. Staff are adept at supporting these pupils well. They adapt their curriculum delivery effectively to meet pupils' individual needs. Nevertheless, in a couple of areas, the school does not identify pupils' misconceptions as quickly as they could be. This means that from time-to-time, gaps in learning go unaddressed.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They benefit from high-quality coaching and support. Staff in the early years are highly skilled. They have meaningful interactions with children, enabling each child to thrive. A stimulating environment enables children to focus on learning for sustained periods.

The published data does not reflect the quality of education that current pupils enjoy. In 2023, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standards in reading, writing and

mathematics at the end of Year 6 was below the national average. These pupils had not had time to benefit from the changes to the curriculum. Currently, most pupils achieve well across a range of subjects. Where this is not the case, it is because some pupils are absent from school too often. These absences cause gaps in their learning.

Reading is a high priority across the school, with staff trained to deliver the phonics programme effectively. Nursery children enjoy stories and rhymes, preparing them for phonics in Reception. Staff provide effective support for those needing extra help. This builds pupils' confidence, helping most to become fluent, accurate readers. However, the same level of readiness is not reflected in terms of early writing. Some pupils develop bad habits in relation to their letter formation which are not addressed. This hinders the quality of some pupils' written communication.

Pupils continue to expand their reading knowledge in key stage 2 through exposure to a range of high-quality literature. Older pupils take pleasure in opportunities to read with younger pupils.

A clear behaviour policy ensures that expectations in lessons are known and followed well by pupils. The school's values are understood by everyone and guide the school's approach to promoting successful learning behaviours. Pupils demonstrate these values in their high levels of focus and engagement in lessons.

Pupils' understanding of healthy relationships and different cultures is exceptional. The school's carefully considered personal development programme is enhanced by special events such as the recent 'well-being day'. Pupils excel in local debate events, developing their skills as well-rounded citizens. By the end of Year 6, they typically leave as thoughtful, knowledgeable individuals, well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Parents and carers value the close-knit school community and the support that the school gives to their families. Staff feel valued and proud to work at this school. They appreciate the support offered by school leaders around their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, the school does not check pupils' understanding carefully enough. As a result, some pupils' misconceptions are not identified or addressed as quickly as they might be. The school should ensure that all staff know how to check what pupils have learned so that they can build knowledge securely over time in all subjects.
- Some pupils do not master accurate letter formation by the time they leave Year 2. This hinders their writing fluency as they move through the key stage 2 curriculum.

The school should ensure that pupils have the skills that they need to be successful writers by the end of key stage 1.

- Some pupils do not attend school often enough. This is causing gaps in learning to widen further. Leaders should build on their strategies to secure good attendance so that pupils attend school regularly.

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	105073
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10321257
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Brian Sharp
Headteacher	Maria Hollis
Website	www.stjosephs-wallasey.wirral.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- This Roman Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in May 2022. The school's next section 48 inspection is due before May 2030.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not use any 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 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. They met with subject leaders and with teachers. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in other subjects. They met with leaders, spoke with pupils and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects.
- 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.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the responses to the online parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Helen Friend, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephanie Swift

Ofsted Inspector

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