

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Laurence's Catholic Primary School

Leaside Avenue, Southdene, Kirkby, Liverpool, Merseyside L32 9QX

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 November 2024

Outcome

St Laurence's Catholic Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school aims for pupils to succeed academically. Pupils benefit from warm and supportive relationships with staff. This gives them the confidence to try their best and to be unafraid to make mistakes. As a result, pupils typically achieve well across a broad range of subjects.

Children in the early years settle in confidently. They develop strong learning behaviours quickly. They are keen and inquisitive learners who show persistence. Pupils throughout the school build securely on these firm foundations. They are attentive in lessons and focus on the task at hand.

Pupils know the school rules and are guided by its values. They gain a strong understanding of fundamental British values such as democracy and the rule of law. Pupils are aware of the differences between people. They know that it is important to respect everyone equally. Pupils' positive attitudes mean they behave well and are happy in school.

Pupils feel confident to share their beliefs and opinions with others. They know that they are listened to and their ideas are valued. Pupils take on positions of responsibility with enthusiasm. They want to make a positive difference. Pupils who act as school leaders are proud of the part they are playing in the recruitment of a new headteacher.

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

Since the school was last inspected, it has acted resolutely to maintain the standards identified at that time. The school has placed reading and developing pupils' vocabulary at

the heart of its curriculum. It has successfully introduced a new phonics programme and made sure staff have the expertise to deliver this well. Throughout the early years, staff immerse children in language and stories. They ensure that children begin to build up their phonics knowledge from the Reception Year. The school provides prompt help for any pupils with gaps in their reading knowledge. Most pupils become fluent and confident readers in readiness for key stage 2.

The school has also strengthened its wider curriculum thinking. It has carefully organised the curriculum from the Nursery Year through to the end of key stage 2. At the same time, the school has carefully considered staff's workload and well-being, for example by ensuring staff have sufficient time to carry out additional responsibilities. The current curriculum is ambitious and relevant to pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

In many subjects, pupils develop detailed subject knowledge and skills as they progress through the school. For example, in science, early years staff used a much-loved storybook to inspire children to investigate shadow formation. Children experimented with the position of a torch with glee. Meanwhile, pupils in Year 6 deepened this learning by considering how sundials work. They showed a secure grasp of appropriate scientific vocabulary.

In most subjects, teachers carefully check pupils have learned all that they should. They skilfully identify and address misconceptions so that pupils' learning is unhindered. However, in one or two subjects, teachers do not support pupils to remember key knowledge over time as well as they could. When this happens, pupils struggle to build on their previous learning.

Starting in the early years, the school quickly identifies pupils' additional needs. It ensures that any barriers to pupils' learning are carefully considered and minimised. Staff use a range of different approaches to help pupils with SEND to access the curriculum successfully and to achieve well.

Attendance remains a high priority. The school is tenacious in its approach to securing pupils' regular attendance. It has taken effective action to reduce the number of pupils who are absent from school too often. These pupils' rates of attendance are improving as a result.

The school prepares pupils well for life beyond their local area. It encourages them to aim high for their future lives. Pupils develop a strong sense of self-belief. They listed pilot, doctor and palaeontologist among the professions they hope to pursue when they are older. Pupils know how to keep safe when they are online and beyond the school gates. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they have the self-assurance and skills to be ready for their next stage of education.

Governors are deeply committed to the school and the community it serves. They have ensured that the school has continued to improve the quality of education pupils receive since the last inspection. However, the governing body does not show the same level of oversight in some other aspects of the school's work. This means it does not hold the

school to account with sufficient rigour in these areas.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teachers do not support pupils well enough to recall and build on learning from previous year groups or key stages. On occasion, this prevents some pupils from having sufficiently secure foundations on which to build new learning. In these remaining curriculum areas, the school should develop strategies to ensure that pupils embed knowledge successfully into their long-term memory.
- There are some gaps in the knowledge and skills of the governing body. This hampers how well the governing body holds the school to account for some aspects of its work. The governing body should strengthen its strategic thinking so that it can support the school more effectively in its improvement work.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

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	104461
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10347878
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	376
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Holmes
Headteacher	Sarah-Jane Carroll
Website	www.stlaurences.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in January 2023. The next inspection is expected to take place in the academic year 2027 to 2028.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector also met with a representative of the archdiocese.

- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. She also listened to pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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 inspector spoke with parents and carers as they dropped their children off at school. The inspector also considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- There were no responses to the online survey for pupils. However, the inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.

Inspection team

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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