

Inspection of St Christopher's Catholic Primary School

Tarbock Road, Speke, Liverpool, Merseyside L24 0SN

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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 are proud of their school. Parents and carers are grateful for the care that their children receive from leaders and staff. Pupils are warmly welcomed each morning with a 'high-five' from the pastoral team. Pupils told the inspector that everybody is friendly at St Christopher's. They hold the view that everyone looks out for each other.

Pupils know that they can talk to their teachers if they have any worries. Pupils said that bullying and name calling are rare. They have great confidence in staff to quickly deal with any such issues should they arise. This helps pupils to feel safe in school.

Pupils try their best to live up to leaders' high expectations of their behaviour and achievement. Pupils compete in games on the playground with respect for their opponents. They work hard in the classroom. Pupils enjoy being recognised and rewarded for their good work and positive behaviour.

Leaders ensure that pupils can access a multitude of after-school activities. Pupils talked with enthusiasm about the badminton and athletics clubs. Pupils enjoy educational trips to places such as the nearby car manufacturing plant, airport and museums. They enjoy taking on additional responsibilities. Year 5 and 6 'mini police' work with local officers to carry out a range of safety initiatives in the area. Pupils willingly raise funds for a selection of charities. This is because they are mindful that others may need their help and support.

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

The new leadership team has worked to improve the curriculum. It is broad and ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This ensures that pupils gain a rich and relevant body of knowledge by the time they leave Year 6. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Subject leaders have carefully considered the knowledge that pupils need to learn in each curriculum area. Teachers have been well trained to deliver the curriculum effectively. In most subjects, content is clearly organised so that pupils build on their knowledge from early years to Year 6. However, in some areas of learning, curriculum leaders are not clear about the knowledge that is taught in the early years. This means that teachers are less able to build upon what children have been taught in the Reception class. As a result, children are less well prepared for their learning in key stage 1.

Teachers ensure that pupils regularly recap their prior knowledge. This helps pupils to remember more of what they have been taught. Pupils use their previous learning to help them tackle increasingly difficult tasks. For example, pupils in Year 3 applied

what they had learned about levers and linkages in key stage 1 to help them produce more-complex structures in their current design and technology projects.

Leaders understand that reading is the gateway to the curriculum. Children in the early years enjoy listening to a range of traditional tales. They are taught phonics from the moment that they enter the Reception class. Well-trained staff deliver the phonics curriculum effectively. They ensure that the books pupils read match the sounds that they already know. If pupils struggle with reading, they receive additional support to help them catch up. As a result, pupils develop into confident, fluent readers.

Teachers in the early years quickly identify any pupils with SEND. This helps ensure that they receive appropriate support as soon as they start school. Leaders work with a range of professionals so that pupils with SEND can receive specialist support where required. These actions enable pupils with SEND to achieve well.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a rise in the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school. Leaders, along with other agencies, work closely with the families of these pupils. This work is beginning to bear fruit. Nonetheless, some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This hinders their achievement.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen carefully to their teachers. In the calm environment of the early years, children concentrate and follow routines sensibly. Pupils become resilient learners who do not give up if they do not succeed at the first attempt.

Pupils are knowledgeable about current world issues. They understand the harmful effects of plastic on the environment and why this makes recycling so important. Teachers use the curriculum to help pupils understand the different religions, cultures and families in society. Pupils know that everybody is different but should always be treated with respect.

Governors are well informed. They use their knowledge of the school effectively to support and challenge leaders to further improve the school's performance. Governors and leaders are considerate of the workload and well-being of staff. Staff appreciate the support that they receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders work well with a range of agencies to support vulnerable families. Staff are provided with regular safeguarding training. This enables them to identify the signs that may indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff know the importance of quickly reporting any concerns, no matter how small.

Teachers use the curriculum well to help pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Older pupils know that not all information on the internet is true. They understand

where trusted sources of information can be found. Visitors to the school have taught pupils about the dangers of gang culture and how to avoid becoming involved in such activity.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This means that they do not achieve as well as they could do if their attendance was better. Leaders must ensure that they build on their recent strategies to reduce the rates of persistent absence.
- Some subject leaders do not have a good enough understanding of the early years curriculum. This means that they do not consider what children know and can do when thinking about the curriculum for pupils in key stage 1. This means that teachers are less able to effectively build on children's learning as they enter key stage 1. Subject leaders should ensure that they fully understand the learning that takes place in the early years. This will ensure that children are better prepared for their learning in Year 1 and beyond.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	133615
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10212236
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	Rita Byrne
Headteacher	Nicola Harrop
Website	www.stchristophersprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	27 and 28 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school. The school had its most recent section 48 inspection in June 2019.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2021. A new assistant headteacher has also been appointed since the last inspection.
- Leaders make use of alternative provision.
- The governing body manage the before-school provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and five members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.

An inspector also spoke with a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool and the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, geography and design and technology. This involved visiting lessons with subject leaders, discussing the subject curriculums, talking to pupils and teachers and looking at pupils' work. An inspector also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also spoke with the leaders for other curriculum areas.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes, lunchtime and during lessons. Pupils also talked to the inspectors about their views of their school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and spoke to parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered responses to the pupil and staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors checked leaders' safeguarding procedures. They viewed a range of safeguarding documentation and looked at how incidents are managed and recorded.

Inspection team

John Tomlinson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tina Cleugh

Ofsted Inspector

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