

Inspection of St Werburgh's Catholic Primary School

Park Grove, Birkenhead, Merseyside CH41 2TD

Inspection dates: 26–27 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel well supported and well cared for at this school. This is because of the strong relationships that they have with staff. Pupils do their best to live up to staff's high expectations. However, many pupils still struggle to achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics because they have gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils are happy and safe. They enjoy coming to school. Pupils value their education. Their attendance is improving.

Pupils enjoy the many trips and visits that enrich the curriculum. A number of pupils talked fondly about their visits to the Williamson Art Gallery and the Victoria Gallery and Museum. Year 6 pupils thoroughly enjoyed the residential visit to Colomendy.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They are well behaved in lessons and around the school. The pupils that we spoke to said that bullying is rare. If it does happen, it is dealt with quickly. Pupils learn the importance of respect for others. They develop a good understanding of the cultures that exist within and beyond their own community. Parents and carers appreciate the hard work of staff. One parent, expressing the views of others, said 'The school is like a family.'

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

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have made many improvements at the school since the previous inspection. The foundations for further change are securely in place. Even so, the quality of education that pupils receive, although improving, continues to require improvement. Pupils do not have the chance to achieve as well as they should. Too many pupils are still not attaining well enough in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Many pupils have gaps in their learning.

Leaders have improved the curriculum. They have thought carefully about the knowledge that pupils will learn and the order in which they will learn it. However, the curriculum is very new. Leaders have not yet had time to check how well this supports pupils' learning.

The new curriculum is beginning to make a difference in some subjects. In geography, for example, pupils were able to describe the location of Birkenhead using the correct vocabulary. They said that their learning in the previous year helped them to be ready for the new learning. However, other pupils in the same year group were less sure about prior learning. They could not remember key facts. In some subjects, such as computing, pupils are not confident in knowing and using technical and subject-specific language.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Children learn the sounds that letters make as soon as they start school. In the past, the teaching of early reading was not good enough. This has improved. Even so, too many pupils still struggle to read independently because of gaps in their learning. Reading books are not always matched carefully enough to pupils' phonic knowledge. Changes made to the curriculum are beginning to help pupils to read with greater fluency and accuracy. By the end of Year 6, pupils' progress in reading is improving. Staff promote a love of reading. Pupils enjoy listening to their teachers read stories to them.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Most of the time, pupils listen carefully and try hard. They pay attention and respond well to staff.

Pupils know the school's Catholic values well. However, they were less sure about fundamental British values. Pupils develop character and resilience. This helps them become confident learners. 'Mindful Mondays' give dedicated time for pupils to talk through concerns and issues. Currently, only a small proportion of pupils attend extra-curricular activities and after-school clubs. This means that they do not have the opportunity to develop their talents and interests beyond their classroom studies.

The headteacher has taken swift action to address underperformance in the early years. As a result, the quality of education in the early years has improved more quickly than in the rest of the school. Children enter school with skills and knowledge lower than those typically expected for their age. Across all areas, including the provision for two-year-olds, the learning environments are purposeful. Staff are highly focused on helping children learn how to read and write and to develop their understanding of number. Children respond well to daily routines. They learn to share, play together, concentrate, have conversations and be confident. Children in early years are well cared for.

Staff are ambitious in providing the best life chances for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils are well supported in school. They achieve better than others in the school because of the specialist support that they receive to access a curriculum that is well matched to their needs.

All staff said the school has improved since the previous inspection. They enjoy working at the school. They feel part of a team. Staff feel well supported by leaders who take account of their workload. They value the opportunities for training and professional development.

Governors know the school very well. They challenge and support the headteacher when making changes to the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher has created a culture of vigilance and care across the school. Pupils' safety and welfare are paramount. Timely and appropriate action is taken for pupils who may be at risk of harm. All staff receive regular training. This includes contextual issues such as alcohol and drug abuse and violent crime. Leaders follow up any concerns swiftly. Strong communication with a range of other agencies ensures that pupils receive the support that they need. Leaders deliver workshops for parents on appropriate aspects of keeping their children safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should by the end of Year 6. Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum but this is still in the early stages for many subjects. It has not had enough time to overcome the legacy of underachievement that affects some pupils. Leaders must review and refine the curriculum for all subjects, and particularly for reading, writing and mathematics, to ensure that pupils are able to make up for gaps in their learning. This will provide them with a firmer foundation on which to build subsequent knowledge.
- Leaders have not had enough opportunity to check how well the new curriculum plans are being implemented across the school. This means they are not sure how well the new curriculum is being taught or whether pupils are learning what they should. Senior leaders should help subject leaders to gain a greater insight into curriculum delivery for the subjects that they lead.
- Pupils enjoy the enrichment opportunities within the curriculum but only a small proportion of pupils engage in extra-curricular activities. This means that they do not have the opportunity to develop their talents and interests. Leaders should further develop enrichment opportunities for pupils so that a greater proportion of pupils have the opportunity to benefit from activities beyond their academic studies.
- Pupils have a sound understanding and appreciation of their faith and the school's Catholic values. However, their appreciation of fundamental British values is not as clear. Pupils do not understand how democracy works. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum includes provision to develop pupils' understanding and appreciation of British values.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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	105091
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10135056
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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mrs Lynn Ireland
Headteacher	Sarah Murphy
Website	www.stwerburghswirral.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	6–7 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The governing body runs before-school provision on the school site.
- The school offers provision for two-year-olds.
- The school received its most recent section 48 inspection in March 2016.

Information about this inspection

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

- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils about their work and school life. We spoke with members of the governing body, representatives of the local authority and the diocese, the headteacher, senior leaders and members of staff.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including information about attendance, safeguarding and checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- We considered five responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, and seven responses to Ofsted’s online survey of school staff.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and computing during the inspection. For these subjects, we held discussions with

subject leaders, visited lessons with subject leaders, looked at examples of pupils' work, met with teachers and spoke with pupils. We also listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Craig Richardson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Maureen Hints	Ofsted Inspector

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