

Inspection of St Julie's Catholic Primary School

Brooklands Road, Eccleston, St Helens, Merseyside WA10 5HG

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 September 2024

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2013.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be members of this happy and caring school. Children in the early years are given a warm welcome. They settle into school life quickly. Positive relationships between staff and pupils are evident throughout the school. Pupils value the worry boxes that they use to help them to talk to adults about any concerns that they may have.

'Buddies' support pupils to play happily together at breaktimes. In lessons and around school, most pupils behave well. They enjoy being recognised for their kindness and positive attitudes to school life. Pupils spoke with pride about the house points, star of the week and lunchtime awards that they receive in assemblies.

The school has high expectations of pupils' academic achievement, including that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils take pride in their work and achieve well across a range of subjects. Children in the early years are exceptionally well prepared for the demands of key stage 1.

Many pupils contribute to school life by taking on additional leadership responsibilities. For example, by becoming school councillors and subject ambassadors. Pupils benefit from clubs that develop their talents and interests through their 'university' experiences.

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

The school has developed an engaging and ambitious curriculum. Careful thought has been given to the essential knowledge that pupils should learn and when this should be taught, from the early years to Year 6. The school works with parents, carers, and other professionals to identify any pupils with SEND. Through this partnership work, the school gains important information about how to meet the needs of these pupils. Staff ensure that pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers.

Staff have a secure knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They use this knowledge to explain new learning to pupils. In many subjects, teachers successfully use their expertise to identify and to address pupils' misconceptions. In most subjects, this is evident in what pupils know and remember. However, in a small number of subjects, pupils' knowledge of some aspects of their learning is not as secure. This hinders pupils' ability to make connections between what they know already and new learning. The school has made some recent changes to these curriculums. However, pupils have had fewer opportunities to revisit and strengthen their learning in these subjects. As a result, some pupils' knowledge is uneven.

Children in the early years are highly inquisitive and keen to learn. They eagerly rise to the challenges that staff provide for them. Staff maximise opportunities to expand children's vocabulary. They miss no opportunity to engage children in high-quality conversation as they learn and play. This helps children in the early years to get off to a flying start.

The school has placed a high priority on ensuring that pupils learn to read well. Children are taught letter sounds as soon as they join the Reception Year. Well-trained staff teach the phonics programme confidently. Pupils are provided with books that are matched to the sounds that they know. They quickly become fluent, confident readers. Pupils who struggle with reading are provided with effective support to help them to catch up quickly.

Older pupils are proud of their roles as reading ambassadors and enjoy reading to children in the early years. Pupils benefit from vibrant and engaging libraries and book areas across the school. This helps them to develop a love of reading. The school provides numerous opportunities for parents to support their children's learning at home. For example, through reading workshops and support.

Pupils are kind and polite. They help each other in lessons and around school. This expectation is established in the early years, where pupils learn how to take turns and listen to each other. The school is relentless in making sure that pupils attend school regularly and on time.

The school maximises opportunities for pupils to engage with their wider community and to become active and responsible citizens. For example, pupils collect donations for foodbanks and deliver friendship cards to a local care home. Pupils understand the importance of treating everyone equally. They learn about other faiths and visit different places of worship.

Governors understand their roles and ensure that they have the knowledge that they need to fulfil their statutory duties. The school seeks to support the well-being of staff as well as pupils. Staff are resoundingly positive about working at the school. They appreciate actions taken by the school to reduce their workload, such as changes to the school's marking policy.

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 small number of subjects, some improvements to curriculums are more recent. Some pupils' knowledge and skills are not as secure as they could be in these subjects. This is because pupils have had less opportunity to secure some important aspects of their learning. The school should ensure that improvements to these curriculums are embedded and implemented fully to support pupils to develop a strong body of knowledge in these subjects.

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	104819
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10337622
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Teresa Sims
Headteacher	Anne Hodgson
Website	www.st-julie.st-helens.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 October 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection took place in July 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in the academic year 2026 to 2027.
- The governing body is responsible for the school's wraparound care provision.
- The school does not make use of 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 has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, and geography. For each deep dive, they had discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with subject leaders and with pupils about their learning in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the acting chair of governors. She also met with a representative of the local authority and with representatives of the diocese.
- Inspectors talked with staff and leaders about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for attendance, behaviour, early years, the provision for pupils with SEND and pupils' personal development.
- 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.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school. They looked at a range of documents related to pupils' welfare and education. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Rebecca Jewitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Schelene Ferris

Ofsted Inspector

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