

Inspection of St Monica's Catholic Primary School

Kelly Drive, Bootle, Merseyside L20 9EB

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 February 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness 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 March 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are made to feel welcome at this school, which prides itself on supporting families in the community that it serves. Pupils appreciate the caring relationships that they have with staff. They benefit well from the pastoral support that is available to them. Pupils trust that staff will help them if they have any worries or concerns. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe at school.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Children in the early years learn how to follow class routines and adult instructions. Pupils across the school behave well and value the importance of treating others with respect.

One of the school's core values is aspiration. This is threaded through the high levels of ambition that the school has for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils' value chances to enrich their learning, such as through trips to the beach and the zoo. They also make the most of opportunities to develop talents and interests. For example, pupils benefit from the wide range of clubs the school provides. These include podcasting, fencing and a well-being club. Many pupils, including pupils with SEND, achieve well during their time at the school.

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

The school has set out the important knowledge that pupils should learn from the Nursery Year through to Year 6. In a small number of subjects, revisions to the curriculum are relatively new. In these subjects, the curriculum is well thought out. However, as a result of weaknesses in the previous subject curriculum, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge that remain unaddressed. At times, this hinders their ability to make sense of new learning and concepts.

Across a number of curriculum subjects, teachers benefit from high-quality training. This helps to ensure that teachers have the subject knowledge and understanding that they need to deliver the curriculum. Staff in the early years provide learning that helps children get off to a positive start in school. In the main, teachers design activities that are well matched to the aims of the curriculum. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, many are well prepared for secondary school.

The school uses effective systems to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Many pupils with SEND progress well through the same curriculum as their classmates. However, some teachers do not have sufficient information to adapt learning well enough for a small number of pupils with SEND. As a result, some pupils with SEND are not supported to access the curriculum as effectively as they could be.

Pupils relish their regular opportunities to read. Pupils are keen readers who begin to develop an enjoyment of books from the Nursery Year. The school ensures that pupils experience a range of genres, including poetry and non-fiction. Many pupils are fluent and confident readers by the end of Year 2. This begins in the early years and Year 1, where pupils begin to learn the different sounds and the letters that represent them. Staff teach

the phonics programme consistently well. They identify and support any pupils who need additional help. Parents and carers told inspectors that they value the information that they receive from the school that helps them to support phonics learning at home.

In lessons, most pupils focus well. Children in the early years learn how to cooperate, take turns and share with one another. Pupils understand the school rules. They refer to these as the 'St. Monica's way.' The school has been very effective in maintaining strong levels of attendance. The school's robust systems and procedures enable staff to swiftly pick up any attendance concerns. The tenacious approach taken by the school means that pupils benefit from the good standard of education that it provides.

Pupils develop a deep and meaningful understanding of fundamental British values. For example, they understand the importance of laws in society. Pupils' understanding around these is supported by assemblies run by local police officers. The school ensures that pupils learn about the signs of healthy relationships. Charitable activities, such as fundraising for a local children's hospice, help pupils to serve their community and develop their understanding of empathy.

Governors support and challenge the school well. They have a sharp focus on the quality of education. Governors work effectively with the school to realise the agreed values. Staff are proud to be part of the school and appreciate what it does to support their workload and well-being. This includes access to training and measures that reduce workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not have sufficient information to adapt learning well enough for a small number of pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils are not supported to access the curriculum as effectively as they could. The school should ensure that teachers are equipped with the information, knowledge and expertise to be able to make effective adaptations to learning so that pupils with SEND achieve well.
- In a small number of subjects, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge as a result of weaknesses in the previous curriculum. Some of these gaps have not been identified or addressed. This limits the depth of knowledge that some pupils have. The school should ensure that teachers are equipped to identify and swiftly remedy these gaps in pupils' knowledge. This is so that pupils can build and further strengthen their 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	104905
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10347917
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	455
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ryan McLoughlin
Headteacher	James Gouldbourne
Website	www.stmonicascatholicprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 March 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Roman Catholic primary school in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The previous section 48 inspection took place in November 2023. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place by the end of 2029.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The governing body operates a breakfast club and after-school provision.

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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education, geography and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also looked at the curriculum and pupils' work in some other subjects. The lead inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. They also considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They also considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online staff survey.
- Inspectors spoke with some parents. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.

Inspection team

David Robinson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Tony McCoy	Ofsted Inspector
Maira Atkins	Ofsted Inspector

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