

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Much Woolton Catholic Primary School

Watergate Lane, Woolton, Liverpool, Merseyside L25 8QH

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 February 2025

Outcome

Much Woolton Catholic Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Much Woolton pupils are warm and welcoming. They enjoy school and appreciate all that staff do to support them. From the early years upwards, there is a tangible air of high expectation. Pupils rise to this. In classrooms, pupils are highly attentive. Pupils know they are expected to give '100% effort in all they do'. Pupils' behaviour and conduct are exemplary. Pupils love to learn and, in turn, achieve well. They leave Year 6 well prepared for their secondary education.

Pupils benefit from an extensive range of experiences on offer beyond the academic curriculum. They develop new talents at clubs such as singing, art and basketball. Visits to museums, the safari park and the cathedral bring learning to life. The school enables pupils to experience competition, including that which is friendly, as well as the opportunity for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to take part. Pupils are very proud of their trophy cabinet. Teams of all ages regularly enjoy success in football, gymnastics and athletics.

Pupils are taught the importance of being caring and compassionate young people with a drive to support the school and wider local community. For instance, pupils regularly raise money for both local and global charities.

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

Leaders at all levels have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the school's previous inspection.

The school has an ambitious curriculum that has been designed carefully. Collaboratively,

the school strives to ensure that research, including staff's own, informs the design of the curriculum. In addition, the school has ensured that staff are well trained and consistent when designing learning activities. As a result, pupils learn well. They are excited to learn new ideas. Pupils are proud of their work. They record their learning in a meaningful way that helps them remember what they have learned.

Pupils learn the basics in English and mathematics well. Early reading and phonics begin as soon as children start in Reception. Expert staff ensure that children learn the sounds and letters they need to begin to read. This continues as pupils move through key stage 1. The small number of pupils who struggle to keep up with the school's phonics programme are given the additional help they need.

In all subjects, there are regular checks on what pupils are learning. However, in some subjects, this information is not shared well enough beyond each classroom. This means the school does not have a deep enough understanding of what pupils know and can do. This prevents the school from making any necessary changes to the curriculum.

Pupils with SEND are identified and supported effectively. These pupils learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. In addition, pupils with SEND are encouraged to take part in all that the school has to offer. For example, there are specific opportunities for pupils with SEND to take part in sports competitions.

The school promotes pupils' positive behaviour very effectively. Pupils move around school calmly. The dining hall is a happy space. Breaktimes are especially joyful. The school has considered its outside provision carefully. The playground and gardens provide pupils with many opportunities to play. This includes den building, digging, dressing up, table tennis, looking after visiting hedgehogs and climbing trees. Pupils are encouraged to develop their resilience, and they do.

The school's personal, social and health education programme is tailored to meet the needs of pupils precisely. It supports them in developing their understanding of the fundamental British values, staying safe, equality and diversity effectively. Pupils know what it means to be a good friend. They are kind and supportive of one another. They say that everyone is welcome at the school. Those in leadership roles, such as the school councillors, wear their badges with pride. They contribute to making their school a better place. Pupils relish the opportunity to join residential trips with their friends. They are especially excited at the prospect of the ski trip to Italy in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are delighted when their good conduct is recognised and a 'Much Woolton Heart' is sent to them in the post. This is in recognition of pupils who demonstrate the school's values of courage, joy, care and compassion.

The school gives pupils' attendance high priority. It supports those families whose children do not attend as well as they should effectively. As a result, pupils typically attend well.

Governors undertake their responsibilities effectively so they know the school's priorities in detail. They use this to support and challenge the school effectively so that it continues to improve. For example, they prioritise staff workload and well-being when making decisions. This helps staff to feel valued. The school ensures that staff are given time to

complete additional tasks, which is especially appreciated.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school is not clear about where some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. This means that the school is not aware that it needs to adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of these pupils. The school should improve how it uses teachers' checks on pupils' learning so the curriculum can be adapted to meet pupils' needs in a timely and effective manner.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2016.

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	104636
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10377896
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	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anna-Marie Brown
Headteacher	Matthew White
Head of School	Marie Wilson
Website	www.muchwoolton.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher leads this and another primary school. At this school, he is supported by a head of school and a deputy head of school.
- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool and had its last section 48 inspection, for schools with a religious character, in May 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due in 2026/27.
- The school offers a breakfast club each morning.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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 the evaluation of the school.

- 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 visited lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also spoke to some subject leaders.
- The inspector observed pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the head of school and other leaders.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and breaktimes. She also spoke with pupils about their views of school life.
- The inspector considered the views of parents and carers. She reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector considered the views of staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Frith Murphy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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