

Inspection of St Cecilia's Catholic Infant School

Snaefell Avenue, Tuebrook, Liverpool, Merseyside L13 7HB

Inspection dates: 8–9 January 2020

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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enjoy their learning. They said that they feel safe at the school. High-quality, well-chosen books and displays about the importance of reading are everywhere. Staff use these resources well to inspire pupils as they learn about authors, stories and knowledge in other subjects.

Leaders and staff said that pupils' individual needs are not an obstacle to pupils' successful education. Staff have improved the way in which they organise pupils' learning. Teachers' training has strengthened their planning and teaching of the curriculum since the previous inspection. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), develop the knowledge and skills that they need in reading, writing and mathematics, as well as in other subjects.

Pupils, parents and carers consistently told inspectors about the caring attitudes shown by staff. Typical comments from pupils included: 'Don't be scared of coming to this school, all the teachers care for us' and 'You make friends and you learn.'

Staff give a successful focus to developing children's good behaviour from the start of their time in Nursery. Pupils who met with inspectors were polite, inquisitive and confident. Pupils told us that bullying is not a problem. They told inspectors that staff are quick to resolve bullying.

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

Pupils told inspectors that a wide range of subjects at the school are their favourite. Leaders and staff have improved the curriculum to teach pupils information in a well-planned, logical order. Pupils develop their knowledge well across subjects, including in science, art and geography.

Many more pupils at the school now attain what they should in reading, writing and mathematics. More pupils also understand these subjects in greater depth. In Year 1, in the phonics screening check, pupils' phonics improved in 2018 but then dipped in 2019. Mostly, this was because of the specific needs of pupils with SEND who need a little more support to be successful in using their phonics.

Staff share stories, poems and information books often with pupils. They use story to teach children new vocabulary. In Nursery, the teacher talked with children about the words 'splishy' and 'sploshy', when sharing the book 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'. Older pupils keenly told inspectors about the author Roald Dahl and the illustrator Quentin Blake, who worked together on many books. Staff have greatly improved pupils' learning of phonics. However, some staff do not always say the sounds that letters make clearly enough.

Pupils want to know more about different people and places, for example about the devastating impact of fires in Australia, which they have seen on television. They

enjoy their learning in geography. They accurately explained to us how to use a compass and coordinates to find locations. They talked to us about important landmarks in the city of Liverpool, which they studied last year. Leaders and staff plan much of the geography curriculum in proper detail. Even so, planning does not include pupils' thorough enough study of a small locality outside of Europe.

In meetings with inspectors, in lessons and as they moved around the school, pupils were sensible. Several pupils were a little excited when they realised that one of the inspectors had the words 'Her Majesty' in his job title. They asked him many questions about Queen Elizabeth II. From Nursery and throughout the school, classrooms were calm, with pupils and staff focused on learning. Although teaching assistants help pupils to learn carefully, we found that leaders could make even better use of these staff to deepen pupils' knowledge.

Leaders and staff ensure that pupils develop their knowledge about the diverse city and country in which they live. Staff plan a helpful variety of opportunities to extend pupils' personal development. Recently, staff helped pupils to understand democracy. They held a mock General Election, to coincide with the national event in which parents and staff were taking part. Pupils learned about what makes a good leader as part of this special day. Pupils develop much knowledge about their responsibilities for planet Earth. They were keen to share their views with inspectors, for instance about the world's consumption of water and meat. In science, pupils know and remember their learning about healthy eating.

Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They ask leaders well-considered questions about the curriculum and pupils' achievements, including about disadvantaged pupils. Governors carefully consider the direction for the school's future development, including about the best ways to reduce the workload of staff.

Leaders do lots to help parents and pupils to understand the importance of good attendance at the school. When issues arise, leaders are quick to offer as much help as possible to individual families.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors make certain that staff are kept fully up to date about national and local issues about safeguarding. Leaders and staff are quick to spot when children or families may need extra help to stay safe. Leaders refer concerns promptly to other professionals, as well as making important links with the local children's centre. The school's learning mentor plays an essential role in providing extra help and advice to families and supporting the work of teachers. Pupils told inspectors that they feel that they can share any worries with staff at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff give pupils, including those with SEND, many opportunities to practise their phonics skills. However, some staff do not accurately say the sounds that letters make. This error risks holding back some children's understanding. Leaders should make certain that all staff always say letter sounds correctly, so that pupils develop precise, accurate phonics skills.
- From Nursery to Year 2, staff give pupils many opportunities to discover information about their local area. However, leaders have not ensured that teachers' planning includes a study of a locality outside of Europe in enough detail. This aspect of pupils' geographical knowledge is less well developed. Leaders should set out precisely what pupils need to learn in this unit of work. Staff can then ensure that pupils develop all the knowledge they need to compare with the geography of Liverpool.
- All staff play a valued role in helping pupils to learn the curriculum, but we found that leaders do not always make best use of the teaching assistants. This means that pupils sometimes wait for the teacher's explanation of the curriculum more than is necessary. Leaders should continue to develop training for teaching assistants about different subjects, so they can fully help pupils to deepen their knowledge.

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	104677
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10121933
Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Maria Lawrence
Headteacher	Elizabeth van de Waal
Website	www.stceciliainfants.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	7–8 November 2017

Information about this school

- The school's most recent section 48 inspection of religious education took place in September 2019.

Information about this inspection

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

- We spoke with parents as they brought their children to the school. We reviewed 13 responses from parents to Ofsted's Parent View survey, including seven free-text responses.
- We talked with pupils, including eight representatives of the school council, about their experiences at the school.
- We spoke with representatives of the local authority and the archdiocese, met with two governors, including the vice-chair, and considered 10 responses from staff to an Ofsted survey.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and science. We spoke with subject leaders, visited some lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and reviewed examples of

their work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 reading to their teachers.

- We considered information about the school’s curriculum in art and writing.
- We spoke with leaders, staff and pupils about the school’s work to keep pupils safe. We checked a sample of leaders’ records about safeguarding.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Iain Sim

Ofsted Inspector

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