

Inspection of St Brendan's RC Primary School, Harwood, Bolton

Brookfold Lane, Harwood, Bolton, Lancashire BL2 4DZ

Inspection dates: 8–9 January 2020

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to St Brendan's. They speak with enthusiasm about their learning and rarely miss a day of school. Pupils say that any falling out or bullying is rare. They are confident that adults would listen to any concerns they may have. Adults have high expectations for all pupils. Pupils behave very sensibly in lessons and around school. They are extremely well mannered.

The way that pupils help and look after each other is exceptional. Parents and carers told inspectors how they value older pupils looking after young children in Reception. They also value the buddy system on the playground, which helps pupils play well together at playtimes.

Pupils are rightly proud of the range of responsibilities they have. These include roles such as school council members and the 'Gift' team. These teams have all made a positive difference to school life. For example, the gift team models positive behaviour and helps new Reception children to settle into school. This contributes to preparing them for responsibilities in the future. Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs they can join, including choir, Spanish and multi-sports. Leaders provide pupils with the skills they need to stay safe, including when using the internet and in the wider community.

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

Leaders and teachers have put in place an exciting curriculum. It is effective in meeting the needs of different pupils. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to practise what they already know before learning new things. Pupils develop knowledge and skills across a broad range of subjects. This prepares them well for the next stage in their education. Governors have a good oversight of the curriculum. They challenge leaders about pupils' achievement across a range of subjects.

Teachers promote a love of reading across the curriculum. Phonics is taught in a logical sequence as soon as children start in the school. Staff have the skills and training needed to deliver high-quality phonics sessions. Reading books are matched to the sounds that pupils are learning in class. This helps them to become fluent readers. Over the last few years, nearly all pupils have been successful in meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Pupils are enthusiastic readers outside of school. Many pupils spoke positively about their visits to the local library. In 2019, pupils leaving key stage 2 did not achieve well in reading compared to other pupils nationally. Leaders recognise why this happened. They have revised the reading curriculum to ensure that pupils' achievement improves. However, these changes are still at early stage of development.

Subject leaders have mapped out the key skills and knowledge that they want pupils to learn across the curriculum. This includes those who are disadvantaged and those

who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The mathematics curriculum is a strength and pupils achieve well compared with other pupils nationally. Teachers have good subject knowledge. The history curriculum also ensures that pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need. They are able to recall what they have learned previously. This is because new learning builds on what pupils already know. The music curriculum is also a strength of the school. Pupils are knowledgeable about a wide range of composers. Pupils learn to play several instruments by the end of key stage 2.

Children quickly settle into Reception, make friends and enjoy their learning. Children are well cared for and feel safe. Teachers make sure that they develop children's early mathematics and language skills. Children achieve well and are prepared well for Year 1.

Staff are proud to work at St. Brendan's. They feel well supported. Staff appreciate leaders' effort to reduce workload. Leaders and staff understand the importance of well-being. Parents who spoke to inspectors commented positively about homework and the information they receive about the curriculum. This allows them to support their children's learning at home.

Teachers have high expectations for pupils. Pupils have an extremely positive attitude to learning. They collaborate highly effectively when learning. Pupils have an exceptionally good understanding of equalities and diversity. Pupils show a clear desire to be responsible citizens. They work to support the local community. They check air quality and organise litter picking. The study of other cultures and appreciation of art and music are important parts of the school's curriculum. Pupils have a deep understanding of different religions and customs. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about aspects of life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff have the training they need to keep pupils safe. Staff understand their role in keeping pupils safe. Leaders make sure that families receive the support that they need. Pupils say they feel safe in school. The curriculum helps pupils understand how to stay safe, both online and in the world outside school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The previous reading curriculum did not ensure that pupils developed the stamina to read at length. Some pupils' comprehension skills were also not strong. Consequently, at the end of key stage 2, pupils did not achieve well in reading. Leaders should ensure that the new approach to reading becomes embedded so that pupils' achievement in reading improves.

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	105246
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10122149
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Joanne Robinson
Headteacher	Fiona Brindley
Website	www.st-brendan.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 December 2006

Information about this school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up post in September 2018. The deputy headteacher took up post in April 2019.
- The inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 was on 27 March 2018.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and five governors. We also spoke to staff about their well-being. I also spoke to the school's improvement officer and representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of Salford.
- We spoke with pupils about their experience of school.

- The school's records of safeguarding checks were reviewed. We spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. We also asked the pupils about how they keep themselves safe and what they would do if they had concerns.
- We observed pupils playing at lunchtimes.
- We spoke with parents and considered the 68 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- In considering the quality of education, we concentrated on reading, mathematics, music and history in depth. We discussed the arrangements for the curriculum and teaching with curriculum leaders and senior leaders. We visited lessons and then talked with pupils about what they had been learning. We looked at pupils' books in these subjects and discussed learning with teachers.

Inspection team

Simon Hunter, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Rigby

Ofsted Inspector

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