

Inspection of a good school: St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School, Feniscowles, Blackburn

Preston Old Road, Feniscowles, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 5EP

Inspection dates:

28–29 January 2020

Outcome

St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School, Feniscowles, Blackburn continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who spoke with me said that they love to attend St Paul's school. It is a friendly, welcoming place. Senior leaders greet pupils with genuine warmth at the start of each school day. Parents and carers who spoke with me said that staff are approachable. Parents also said that staff sort out any concerns that their children may have.

Pupils thrive and develop their knowledge and skills well. They benefit from an ambitious curriculum and teachers' high expectations. Classroom learning is often enriched by exciting experiences. Residential adventures, theatre trips and visits to museums help build and extend pupils' knowledge.

Pupils relish the opportunities they have to take on roles of responsibility. These include being librarians, faith ambassadors and eco-warriors. After-school clubs such as yoga, science and gymnastics encourage pupils' wider interests. Pupils take part in activities that help support community projects such as the local food bank.

Pupils told me they feel safe and well cared for in school. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are polite and eager learners. Pupils found it difficult to think of any incidents of bullying. They told me that they believe that adults would quickly stop any that did happen.

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

Dedicated and knowledgeable leaders provide pupils with a good quality of education. Governors know the school well. They visit frequently to check on how the school is doing. Almost all staff feel valued. Leaders carefully manage staff workload. They ensure that tasks and activities have clear purpose.

Senior leaders have designed and implemented an ambitious curriculum. The curriculum is rooted in the school's faith-based ethos. It develops pupils' knowledge of the world beyond Blackburn. Curriculum planning ensures that pupils build on what they already know through a well-considered order of lessons. This helps pupils to learn and remember what they have been taught. Pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects. In 2019, Year 6 pupils' attainment in national assessments was in line with national averages.

Leaders provide appropriate training to all teachers. This helps them develop their teaching skills. In some subjects, such as computing and science, some teachers have gaps in their subject knowledge. This sometimes results in tasks not being ambitious enough for all pupils so that they acquire sufficient knowledge of the subject. Leaders have taken action to increase staff subject knowledge.

Leaders know that reading is key in allowing pupils to access learning. The teaching of phonics is carefully designed to promote pupils' reading fluency and confidence. Lessons are carefully structured and delivered by well-trained staff. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is consistently above average. Pupils develop a love of reading. They visit the school's library and outdoor book Tardis frequently. Pupils read with expression and confidently speak of their favourite types of books. These range from contemporary comedy, to Japanese manga adventure novels.

The well-designed curriculum helps all pupils develop a secure knowledge of mathematical ideas. Pupils use what they remember about other areas of mathematics to solve new problems. For example, pupils in Year 4 applied what they knew about the properties of shapes to identify the coordinates of a polygon's missing vertices. The curriculums in other subjects are planned to take account of when mathematical ideas are introduced. They provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge and apply their skills.

Vocabulary is routinely promoted in all subjects, particularly science and mathematics. As a result, pupils are confident in their use of technical terms.

The leader responsible for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is knowledgeable. She ensures that teachers design learning to meet pupils' needs. Pupils with SEND take full advantage of all the curriculum has to offer. They learn alongside their peers and achieve well.

The curriculum is jam-packed with opportunities to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about the wider world, including other faiths. They are taught how to keep safe and look after themselves by visitors such as fire officers and Gerald the giraffe. Older pupils act as mentors to children in the Reception class. They help them to get the best out of school life. Visits to theatres and museums provide exciting experiences that allow pupils to learn about culture, science and history. Residential adventures help to develop pupils' self-confidence. All pupils can take part in many different clubs and sports.

Early years is a vibrant, safe and exciting place to learn. As a result, children achieve well. Staff are caring and welcoming. The curriculum is designed to take account of children's

own interests. It helps them to thrive. There is a strong focus on language and communication. 'Chatter boxes' are used effectively to help children to extend their vocabulary and become confident communicators.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and all staff have frequent training that ensures they have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. Staff are vigilant and dedicated to keeping pupils safe. Leaders complete appropriate pre-employment checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils. Leaders keep meticulous records relating to any safeguarding concerns. They share this information with the right people when it is necessary to protect pupils who may be at risk of harm or to help ensure their well-being. Governors are knowledgeable about safeguarding because they receive appropriate training. They ensure that the school's internet connection has appropriate monitoring and filtering to help protect pupils and staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects such as science and computing some teachers have minor gaps in their knowledge. These gaps relate to specific aspects of the subjects such as coding, spreadsheets and astronomy. As a result, the activities that teachers set for pupils may not be as ambitious as they should be to allow pupils to know more and remember more. Leaders should ensure that teachers receive the training and support they need to help pupils build the knowledge they need.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 8–9 October 2015.

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	119649
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10110994
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	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derek Hardman
Headteacher	Gary Foster
Website	www.stpaulsfeniscowles.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 October 2015

Information about this school

- A new senior leadership team has been appointed since the last inspection. They commenced their role in September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I looked in detail at reading, mathematics and science. This involved discussions with leaders, visits to lessons, looking at examples of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and discussions with pupils. I also listened to pupils reading.
- I also took the opportunity to look at a range of books from a range of other curriculum areas and speak with the leader responsible for computing.
- I spoke with members of the governing body, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. I also held a discussion with two local authority officers who have visited the school. I had a telephone discussion with a representative of the Diocese of Salford.
- I reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and the checks carried out during the appointment of staff.

- I considered the 50 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire for parents. I also considered the 28 responses from staff and the 84 responses from pupils to Ofsted’s questionnaires.

Inspection team

John Nixon, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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