

Inspection of a good school: St Peter and St Paul RC Primary School

Pilkington Street, Bolton, Lancashire BL3 6HP

Inspection dates:

4–5 February 2020

Outcome

St Peter and St Paul RC Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is a hive of activity. Pupils' days are filled with interesting and exciting lessons and activities. The classrooms and corridors are filled with books. Pupils enjoy author visits and class story time, as well as choosing a book to read at home.

Pupils know that the adults in this school care deeply about them. Every morning, the site manager welcomes each pupil as they walk through the door. Teachers arrange trips and visitors to school to help pupils learn more about their home town and beyond. The counsellor listens to any worries that pupils may have.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. They listen carefully to their teachers and try hard with their work. Leaders and teachers have high expectations. They are determined that everyone achieves well. Any silly behaviour is dealt with quickly so that everyone can get on with their work.

Pupils are polite and respectful. Older pupils take good care of the youngest children. They enjoy playing together at breaktimes. Any falling-out between pupils is quickly resolved. Pupils are adamant that bullying is extremely rare. They are confident that adults would deal with any concerns effectively. This helps them to feel well cared for and safe in school.

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

Leaders have developed a broad, ambitious and relevant curriculum, including in the early years. At the start of every year, pupils begin their learning with finding out about the history, events and people of the town that they live in. This is because some of the school's pupils do not come from the local area. The school's curriculum plans set out clearly what pupils should be taught and when. Curriculum leaders, including in the early years, know what is going well and what needs improvement in their subjects.

Teachers check how well pupils have remembered what they have been taught. This helps them plan their next lessons. For example, some older pupils told me how they struggled to grasp equivalent fractions. These pupils explained how their teacher helped them to build their competence and confidence to work these out. However, younger pupils and some older pupils struggle to make sense of the written mathematical problems that their teachers sometimes set. Also, too often, pupils simply record their answer to these problems without their workings out.

Across the school, pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for the demands of the key stage 3 curriculum. Adults in the early years are highly skilled in planning a curriculum that enables the youngest children to flourish. Early mathematics is particularly well planned.

Across the school, pupils enjoy learning about the world around them through history, geography, science and art. However, in these subjects, topics are taught discretely. This means that there are missed opportunities for pupils to make connections between topics, such as civilisations over time in history.

Leaders were concerned about weaknesses in the previous reading programme. In the past, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 has been below the national average. Leaders have introduced a new programme to get phonics and early reading off to a flying start from the Reception class. The teachers in the early years foster a love of reading. This enthuses young children to pick up books to read.

Teachers are confident and capable in delivering the daily phonics and early reading programme. Specialist support staff work with any pupils who struggle to keep up, as well as those pupils who are new to the country. Pupils who speak English as an additional language quickly catch up with their classmates.

Pupils love sharing their reading books with parents and carers. These books match the sounds that pupils know. Older pupils read widely and often. However, some pupils find some of the non-fiction books hard to make sense of. This is because the subject matter is beyond pupils' experiences.

Pupils behave well around the school. Pupils take pride in their work. They take good care of their classrooms and resources. From the start, teachers build independence and resilience in their pupils. Year 6 prefects set a good example for the youngest children.

Teachers adapt the curriculum, including in the early years, so that all pupils can take part. They weave the support required for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) into their lesson plans. This helps pupils with SEND to take part in lessons alongside their peers.

All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, experience the best of what is on their doorstep. Pupils visit the seaside, art galleries and museums. There are frequent visitors and events in school to further enhance the curriculum.

Leaders put pupils' best interests at the forefront of their work. They are determined that every pupil achieves well at this school. They make sure that staff feel valued and supported. Governors are well informed about the school. They use this information well to challenge and support senior leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders carry out thorough checks to make sure that staff are suitable to work with children. They make sure that staff and governors keep up to date with their safeguarding training. This means that everyone knows their roles and responsibilities. Staff act swiftly when they have any concerns. They make sure that pupils and their families get the help that they need. They work well with other agencies when specialist advice and help are needed. There are trained adults available for pupils to talk to about any worries. Leaders make sure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They also give parents advice and guidance about how to keep their children safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The content of some non-fiction reading books that pupils read is too challenging. Although the text in these books matches the sounds that pupils know, pupils do not have the knowledge that they need to make sense of what they are reading. This makes learning to read tricky. Leaders and teachers should make sure that both the text and the content match pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- In mathematics, teachers set pupils written mathematical problems to solve. Sometimes, pupils struggle to read these written problems. This is because the language and vocabulary are too complex. Also, teachers do not routinely insist that pupils set out how they have solved these written mathematical problems. This means that teachers cannot check whether pupils select and use the appropriate methods correctly. Leaders should ensure that teachers match the vocabulary and language in written mathematical problems to pupils' stage in reading. Teachers must ensure that pupils show their working out.
- The school's curriculum plans set out clearly what pupils must learn and when. Topics are taught in a sensible order so that pupils build on their previous learning. However, in some subjects, these plans do not connect learning across the different topics sufficiently well. For example, teachers do not systematically build pupils' understanding of aspects such as empire, settlement and land use over time. Leaders should review curriculum plans to make sure that pupils build their knowledge and understanding of key concepts over time and across different topics.

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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 15–16 February 2012.

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	105225
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10111019
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	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Maria Borszcz
Headteacher	Trish Grogan
Website	www.sspp.bolton.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	15 December 2015

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in January 2017.
- A number of pupils join the school at times other than those which are typical. Many of these pupils are international new arrivals. Most of these pupils do not speak English when they arrive.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, middle leaders, teachers and support staff. I spoke with the chair and two members of the governing body. I also spoke with representatives from the diocese and local authority.
- I spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- There were 39 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also spoke to parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- I considered the 30 responses to the staff survey. There were 28 responses to the pupil survey. I met with staff and pupils.

- I met with the designated safeguarding lead. I reviewed documentation relating to safeguarding. I spoke with staff and pupils and considered the survey responses from staff, pupils and parents and carers around safeguarding.
- I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at breaktimes and around school. I spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of them.
- I looked in detail at reading, mathematics and history. For each of these subjects, I spoke to teachers and leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books, as well as other evidence of their learning. I also considered other subjects across the curriculum.

Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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