

# Inspection of a good school: Banks Methodist School

Chapel Lane, Banks, Southport, Merseyside PR9 8EY

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Inspection date: 14 July 2021

## Outcome

Banks Methodist School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a caring and nurturing community. Pupils are happy and eager to start school in the morning. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond by behaving well. In lessons, pupils listen attentively and support each other well. Pupils are polite. They are proud of their school.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe. They know that they can tell a trusted adult if they are worried about something. Pupils said that bullying is rare and when it does occur is dealt with quickly by adults in the school.

Many pupils join and leave the school during the academic year. Staff get to know new pupils very quickly. This helps pupils to settle and swiftly become part of the school community.

Pupils enjoy the wealth of activities that are available at break and lunchtime in the newly developed play areas. Pupils also access some exciting outdoor educational trips to broaden their experiences beyond the local area. Their musical understanding is enhanced by attending professional concerts and performances.

Parents and carers are very positive about their children's experience at the school. A typical comment was, 'The family environment offers a safe place for my child to learn and develop beyond my expectations.'

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They want them to develop into well-rounded individuals. Most pupils achieve well. Year 6 pupils are well prepared for their learning in secondary school.

Subject leaders have planned learning carefully in many subjects, including English, mathematics and music. In these areas, curriculum plans set out what pupils will learn and when they will gain new knowledge from the early years to Year 6. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to explain new learning to pupils clearly. They revisit prior learning so that pupils can build on their knowledge over time. Teachers check that pupils remember what they have been taught. However, this is not the case for all subjects. In a few areas of the curriculum, it is less clear what knowledge pupils will learn. This hampers teachers from knowing exactly what should be taught and when they should teach it. Some subject leaders are new to their roles. They are at the early stages of checking that the curriculum is being delivered as well as possible across the school.

Leaders have improved the way phonics is taught. Children in the Nursery Class have opportunities to experience different sounds through many activities, such as listening to nursery rhymes and singing songs. Teachers are knowledgeable and begin to teach phonics as soon as children start in the Reception Class. Reading books are closely matched to the sounds that pupils have learned. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics well to sound out unfamiliar words. They read with increasing fluency. Pupils who find reading difficult, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), get the extra help that they need to catch up. Pupils have access to high-quality texts in the library and online. Older pupils spoke enthusiastically about their favourite authors and the books that they have enjoyed reading.

The learning environment in the early years is well resourced. Children have meaningful opportunities to develop their mathematical knowledge and communication skills. Adults help children to make links in their learning. This helps children in the early years to be ready to start Year 1.

Leaders work well with external agencies and families to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are met. Leaders adapt the curriculum and provide resources which enable pupils with SEND to access the same learning as their peers. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

Children in the early years, and pupils in the rest of the school, follow clear routines. This helps to maintain a calm and orderly environment as they move around school and settle into lessons quickly. Pupils have positive relationships with their teachers. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that their learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities which help them to develop their health and well-being, such as sports and outdoor activities. Pupils have opportunities to learn about different faiths and cultures. This helps them to respect differences between people. Pupils learn about British values, including democracy. They enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being members of the school council.

Leaders and governors work well together. They take account of staff's workload and the well-being of staff and pupils. Staff are proud to work in the school and they feel valued.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on staff who work in the school. Staff are vigilant about the potential risks that pupils may face. Staff receive up-to-date safeguarding training. They know what actions to take if they have any concerns about a pupil's safety. Leaders work closely with external agencies to make sure that pupils get the help that they need. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, for example when on the road through Bikeability courses and through visitors from the fire service and police. Pupils know how to work online safely.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In most subjects, leaders have identified the knowledge that they want pupils to learn and the order in which they will learn it. However, the curriculum plans in some other subjects are not as detailed. This means that sometimes pupils cannot build on their learning as they move through the school. Leaders should ensure that all subject curriculum plans identify exactly what knowledge they want pupils to learn and remember from the early years through to Year 6.
- Some subject leaders are new to their roles and do not have a clear enough understanding of their subject. As a result, they do not know whether their curriculum plans are being implemented effectively. Senior leaders should ensure that these subject leaders develop their subject knowledge so that they can monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum for their area of responsibility.

## 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 or outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 in July 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 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.

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 [here](#).

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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119405
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10197450
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	76
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Stephen Wedlin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Draper
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.banks.lancsngfl.ac.uk">http://www.banks.lancsngfl.ac.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	6 and 7 July 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school had its most recent section 48 inspection, undertaken by the Diocese of Blackburn, in June 2016. The date of the next section 48 inspection has been delayed due to the pandemic. It is likely to take place in the summer term 2022.
- The governing body manages the breakfast club and after-school provision at the school.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the senior teacher, subject leaders and members of staff. An inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. Inspectors also met with a representative from the Diocese of Blackburn and a consultant employed by the school.

- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. They also looked at minutes of governing body meetings.
- To inspect safeguarding, an inspector looked at safeguarding policies and reviewed leaders' record of checks on the suitability of staff and governors. Inspectors also spoke to pupils and staff about safeguarding and considered parents' views.
- Inspectors considered the 17 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 17 free-text responses. They considered the eight responses to the pupil survey and the eight responses to the staff survey. An inspector spoke with parents before the start of the school day to gather their views.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and music. They visited a sample of lessons in these subjects, met with subject leaders, reviewed pupils' work and had discussions with teachers and a small group of pupils. An inspector observed pupils reading to an adult. In addition, inspectors reviewed the curriculum planning for geography, science and design and technology.

### **Inspection team**

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Adam Sproston

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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