

Inspection of a good school: St John Southworth Roman Catholic Primary School, Nelson

Lomeshaye Road, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 0DQ

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2021

Outcome

St John Southworth Roman Catholic Primary School, Nelson continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive at St John Southworth eager to begin the new school day. They said that they enjoy coming to school because teachers make learning fun. Staff ensure that all aspects of school life are underpinned by the 'SJS values' of kindness, honesty, love, justice and faith. They want pupils to learn how to become valued citizens who contribute to society.

Pupils can access a wealth of extra-curricular activities. They also raise funds for a range of charities. Pupils are proud to be a school councillor, Caritas ambassador or library monitor.

Pupils feel safe in school. They are taught how to stay safe when they are out in the school community and when they are working online. Pupils are confident that teachers will deal with any name-calling and bullying quickly and effectively.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their achievement. Pupils work hard to meet these expectations. They know that their positive behaviour is recognised and rewarded through a system of house points or earning the title of 'star of the week'.

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

Leaders have ensured the curriculum is broad and balanced. They are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers use trips, visitors and workshops to widen pupils' experiences and deepen their knowledge of subjects. Subjects are carefully planned to ensure that pupils continue to build on their learning as they move through topics and year groups. For example, in mathematics, pupils are able to use their prior learning to tackle increasingly difficult four-digit number problems with confidence and success.

Teachers mostly use assessment well to gauge what pupils have learned. However, in a small number of subjects, accurate checks on pupils' learning are not in place. This means that staff are not able to identify what pupils have previously learned. This hinders pupils from building on their prior knowledge as effectively as they could.

Leaders have prioritised reading across the school. They have invested in reading books and further training for staff. Children are taught phonics from the first day that they enter the Reception class. They build on what they learn because the phonics programme is taught in a logical order. Books are well matched to the sounds that they know. This helps children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 to become fluent and confident readers. Any pupils who fall behind with their phonics knowledge are provided with extra support to help them catch up.

Older pupils are enthusiastic about reading. They can access a range of books from the school library. Pupils love hearing teachers read to them. They told the inspector that this helps them to learn new vocabulary and to read with expression.

Leaders are quick to identify pupils with SEND. Staff have been well trained to understand how to best meet the needs of pupils with SEND. This training enables staff to make adaptations to different learning activities. These adaptations ensure that pupils with SEND have access to the full curriculum. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They listen attentively in lessons. Learning is rarely interrupted by poor behaviour or low-level disruption. In the lunch hall, and on the playground, pupils are friendly and polite. Older pupils enjoy looking after the Reception children as part of the school's 'seeds and gardeners' project. Teachers help pupils understand how to be healthy, tolerant citizens. Pupils understand the importance of equality and display a rich understanding of other faiths and cultures.

Staff are proud to work at St John Southworth. They appreciate that their workload and well-being is carefully considered by leaders. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and the curriculum. They use this knowledge to effectively support and challenge leaders to provide the best they can for pupils. Parents and carers are particularly appreciative of the support leaders provide for them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a culture of safeguarding. Staff are trained to spot the signs of pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff understand the importance of ensuring concerns are reported quickly and in line with school procedures.

Leaders know the risks within the local community. They use the curriculum to teach pupils about topics such as the dangers of substance misuse and inappropriate use of social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' checks on pupils' learning are less well developed in a small number of curriculum subjects. This means that they are not always able to identify what pupils have learned and what they have forgotten. As a result, pupils' prior learning is not always being built upon as effectively as it could be. Leaders need to ensure that staff receive further training to more accurately identify what pupils know and remember of the taught curriculum.

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, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as 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 Ofsted 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.

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	119655
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10199924
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	John McManus
Headteacher	Jemma Stuttard
Website	www.st-johnsouthworth.lancs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 July 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have been appointed.
- This is a voluntary-aided Catholic primary school. The school had its most recent section 48 inspection in December 2016.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The governing body manages the before- and after-school provision.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher and five members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes, lunchtime and during lessons. Pupils also talked to the inspector about their views of their school.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, physical education and mathematics. This involved visiting lessons with subject leaders, discussing curriculum plans, talking to pupils and teachers and looking at pupils' work.
- The inspector held discussions with the subject leaders for computing and art and design. He also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and spoke to parents at the start of the school day. He also reviewed the responses to the pupil and staff questionnaires.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact with school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

Inspection team

John Tomlinson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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