

Inspection of Darwen St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Turncroft Road, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 2BW

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 March 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to belong to this encouraging school community. They benefit from the positive relationships that staff have forged with them. Pupils said that staff are kind and helpful. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils live up to the high expectations that leaders have for them. They know that leaders want them to do their best. Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are enthusiastic about their learning. They work hard and with interest in lessons.

Pupils enjoy active playtimes with their friends. They understand the importance of respect. Pupils support each other and behave well. They appreciate being able to talk to staff if they have concerns. Pupils said that staff will deal with any incidents of bullying quickly and appropriately.

The school's values remind pupils that they are important and that they have a voice. They have many opportunities to play an active role in both their school and their community.

By carrying out a variety of responsibilities such as school and ethos councillors, pupils learn that they can make a difference. They take pride in organising charity events, such as 'foodbank Fridays'. Pupils enjoy taking part in sporting competitions and after-school clubs.

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

Leaders have designed an interesting curriculum that is suitably broad and ambitious for all pupils, including those pupils with SEND.

Leaders are clear about the important knowledge that they want pupils, including children in the early years, to learn. In most subjects, leaders have ordered this content carefully so that pupils progress well through the curriculum, knowing and remembering more over time.

Most subject leaders provide a wealth of suitable information for teachers. This helps teachers to develop their subject knowledge and deliver subject curriculums effectively. As a result, pupils deepen their understanding over time. For example, in geography, older pupils use their knowledge of continents to support them to describe the location of the world's main mountain ranges.

A few subject leaders lack a thorough understanding of the important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn and by when. Consequently, teachers are not clear enough about the building blocks that pupils, including children in the early years, should gain to achieve the milestones that leaders have identified. The lack of clarity about what pupils should learn also hinders these subject leaders from providing guidance to teachers on how to deliver the curriculum more effectively.

Leaders have ensured that the early reading curriculum sets out clearly what they want pupils to learn and by when. Children in the early years learn sounds and letters as soon as they begin in the Reception class. Staff have received training to deliver the phonics programme effectively. They make sure that pupils practise their reading regularly with books that are well matched to the sounds that they know.

Teachers keep a close check on how well pupils, including children in the early years, are getting on with their reading. Staff provide additional support so that those pupils who fall behind can catch up. Almost all pupils gain fluency and confidence in reading by the end of Year 2. Through their study of suitable texts, and teachers' strong subject knowledge, older pupils develop their reading accuracy and comprehension skills.

Leaders have made sure that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified early. Well-trained teachers and teaching assistants adapt their approaches to ensure that this group of pupils access the curriculum and achieve well. Pupils have regular opportunities to recap on previous learning before new concepts are introduced. For example, in the early years, children are encouraged to revisit and use correct mathematical vocabulary. Leaders make sure that pupils with SEND benefit from specialist support when needed.

Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Even so, leaders have invested in specialist staff training to provide additional support to pupils who need help with their emotional well-being.

Leaders ensure that pupils develop their understanding of the world beyond their local community. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They learn about the importance of equality and diversity through various aspects of school life.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties and offer appropriate support and challenge to leaders. Staff are proud to work at the school. They share leaders' ambitions and want the best for pupils. Staff appreciate that school leaders are approachable and considerate of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that the school's safeguarding team have strong expertise and local knowledge. Staff work together with families to provide advice and to signpost them to sources of additional help when needed.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular safeguarding training, including on issues relating to peer-on-peer abuse. This means that staff can spot the signs that indicate that a pupil could be at risk from or suffering from harm.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. This includes recognising some of the features of healthy relationships and knowing how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not clarified their expectations about the specific knowledge and vocabulary that pupils, including children in the early years, need to learn and remember. This hinders teachers when designing learning that builds on what pupils know already and prevents these subject leaders from providing guidance for teachers on how to improve the delivery of these curriculums further. Leaders should ensure that they finalise their curriculum thinking in these subjects. This will allow teachers to design learning so that pupils can deepen their knowledge and understanding of these subjects over time.

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

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| Unique reference number | 119458 |
| Local authority | Blackburn with Darwen |
| Inspection number | 10200808 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 274 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Fred Kershaw |
| Headteacher | Victoria Weddle |
| Website | www.stpeterscep.co.uk/ |
| Date of previous inspection | 20 and 21 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Several new members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- School leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and senior leaders. They also spoke with subject leaders and members of staff. They spoke with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of the local authority and the Diocese of Blackburn.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and during playtime and lunchtimes. They spoke with different groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school, their learning and their behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, English, geography and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also considered aspects of a number of other subjects in the school's curriculum.
- Inspectors spoke to some parents and considered the views of parents and carers shared through Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments received via the free-text facility. There were no responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff or pupils.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation shared by school leaders, including the school development plan, the minutes taken at governors' meetings and leaders' self-evaluation document.

Inspection team

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