

Inspection of a good school: St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Church Lane, Shevington, Wigan, Lancashire WN6 8BD

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 March 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy all that this school has to offer. They appreciate the wide range of activities available to them. This helps pupils to develop their interests and improve their physical health.

Pupils behave as leaders expect them to. Their conduct reflects the school's values. Older pupils carry out their leadership roles enthusiastically and with pride. They enjoy reading to their younger 'buddies' and writing stories for them. Pupils understand that they are role models for younger pupils and children in early years.

Pupils care deeply about one another and about others in their local community and beyond. They respect the differences between people. Pupils said that this is a natural part of growing up in modern Britain.

Pupils are happy and safe in school. They know that they can go to the Butterfly Room if they need to talk with an adult about any worries. Pupils said that if bullying happens, leaders will deal with it quickly.

Leaders expect all pupils to achieve well. Their actions to improve the quality of education are beginning to bear fruit. However, at this point in time, pupils' knowledge is uneven across the curriculum. In some subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

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

New leaders have acted swiftly to improve the curriculum and to raise staff's expectations of what pupils should achieve. Leaders have brought about many positive changes in a short space of time. There is much to celebrate. However, improvements to the

curriculum in several subjects are recent and not fully embedded. Pupils do not build their learning securely over time in these subjects.

Leaders have worked closely with subject leaders to develop their curriculum expertise. This has resulted in a well-thought-out curriculum in some subjects, including in early years. Teachers benefit from clear guidance that sets out what pupils should learn and the order in which it should be taught. They have been given high-quality training to ensure that they deliver these subject curriculums in the way that leaders intend. Teachers are adept at finding out what pupils already know in these subjects. They use assessment strategies well to plan the next steps of learning. As a result, pupils build confidently on secure prior learning and achieve well.

In several other areas, leaders' work to improve the curriculum is ongoing. These subject leaders are still finalising their curriculum thinking. This means that they have not provided teachers with sufficient guidance to deliver these curriculums well. Teachers are not clear about what content to deliver and when this needs to be taught. In addition, teachers do not use assessment strategies well enough to identify what pupils know and do not know. This hinders how well teachers design learning that builds on pupils' knowledge.

Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme. Staff have been trained to deliver this programme well. Leaders are in the process of purchasing new reading books to support this programme. In the meantime, they have ensured that pupils practise their reading from carefully selected books. These books match the sounds that pupils know and are learning well. Pupils use their growing phonics knowledge accurately when writing. Leaders ensure that pupils who need help to catch up receive effective support in reading as well as in other subjects.

Pupils enjoy listening to the well-chosen stories that teachers share with them. Older pupils read regularly. Pupils said that they enjoy selecting books from the well-stocked school library. They choose to read books that support their understanding of other subjects. By the end of Year 6, pupils read fluently and with enjoyment.

Children in early years quickly settle into the school's routines. They listen carefully to adults and follow instructions closely. Older pupils build on this positive start. They are attentive in lessons and do not disrupt each other's learning. Pupils with SEND are identified quickly. They receive effective support so that they access the same curriculum as the other pupils in their class.

Leaders carefully consider pupils' wider development. They ensure that pupils benefit from the high-quality opportunities on offer. Pupils think of others. They engage in regular fundraising and charity work. Pupils develop a secure understanding of what is right and wrong. This includes thinking about what makes a healthy relationship. Pupils are well prepared to be responsible citizens.

Governors bring a rich array of expertise and experience to their role. Leaders and governors recognise that the pace of curriculum improvement has increased the demands

placed on staff. That said, most staff appreciate leaders' actions to support their workload.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that science and history may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all staff, including those who are new to the school, are well trained in safeguarding. They ensure that staff understand and carry out their roles and responsibilities diligently. This includes providing support for pupils' emotional health and well-being.

Leaders work with a range of external agencies to keep pupils safe. They ensure that pupils and their families receive the support that they need.

Pupils are taught to keep safe when they are out and about in the community. This includes keeping safe around roads, railways and water. Pupils also learn how to keep themselves safe when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In several subjects, leaders are still refining their curriculum thinking. They are still determining the key knowledge that they want pupils to learn and the order in which it should be taught. As a result, pupils have not built a rich body of knowledge across the curriculum. Leaders should rapidly complete and implement their revised curriculums so that pupils can learn well across all subjects.
- In line with their curriculum thinking, leaders' approaches to assessment are still being refined. In several subjects, teachers do not use assessment strategies as well as they should to support pupils to learn and remember subject knowledge. Leaders should provide teachers with the guidance that they need to plan learning that builds on what pupils know and can do. This is so that pupils can learn consistently well across subjects.

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 a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in 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 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	106508
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10211057
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	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Peter Rushton
Headteacher	Helen Crowder
Website	www.saintbernadettes.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to the school's leadership arrangements. The current headteacher took up post in September 2021. Prior to this, an interim headteacher was in post for a year. There has also been a restructuring of the senior leadership team. This has led to a reduction in the number of assistant headteachers and in the hours that they work.
- This school belongs to the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in February 2017.
- This school has an on-site nursery for three- and four-year-old children. The nursery is managed by the governing body.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school. They spoke with governors, including the chair of the governing body, and reviewed minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the archdiocese. Inspectors also spoke with the headteacher's mentor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, physical education and science. They talked with the curriculum leaders of these subjects. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and looked at samples of pupils' work from other subject areas.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers through the responses to Ofsted's Parent View. Inspectors also spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They reviewed leaders' documentation and spoke to leaders and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school, including how safe they feel. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils through the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff and considered their views through the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jonathan Keay

Her Majesty's Inspector

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