

Inspection of St Bede's Catholic High School

St Anne's Road, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 4TA

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming school. Adults place a strong emphasis on making sure that pupils are happy and safe. Pupils are proud to belong to their school. They told inspectors that everyone is kind to each other. There is mutual respect and bullying is rare. Pupils said that there is always someone that they can talk to if they need support to resolve issues, including any incidents of bullying.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This is reflected in pupils' positive attitudes towards their learning. The school environment is calm and friendly, both in lessons and at social times.

Leaders expect all pupils to try their best. Pupils benefit from teachers with strong subject knowledge. However, the curriculum is in the process of being redesigned. This is because the predecessor curriculum did not give pupils the breadth of knowledge that they needed. This means that some pupils do not have the depth of knowledge that they require to achieve as highly as they should.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of opportunities that teachers provide to widen their horizons and deepen their understanding of the world. For example, pupils participate in residential visits to New York and Paris. They enjoy an extensive range of extra-curricular clubs and activities such as sports, gardening, art and sign language.

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

Leaders and governors have a clear vision for improving the quality of education at St Bede's Catholic High School. They have reviewed the curriculum to ensure that it is suitably broad and sufficiently ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is because, until recently, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum has been sufficiently aspirational. Furthermore, leaders' systems to check on the quality of the curriculum across subjects have not been sufficiently focused on how well teachers deliver subject content. This has prevented some pupils from learning as much as they should.

In some curriculum areas, subject leaders are well on the way to revising the content of their curriculums. In these subjects, leaders have clearly identified the knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which they should learn it. This helps pupils build on what they already know. In other curriculum areas, subject leaders are still in the process of thinking about what pupils need to know and remember. This is hindering how well some pupils learn.

A whole-school approach to assessment is in place across all subjects to ensure that teachers regularly check pupils' understanding and identify misconceptions. In subjects where teachers are clear about the knowledge that they want pupils to know, this assessment system is increasingly effective. It helps pupils to identify

gaps in their knowledge and to make improvements. Where subject knowledge is not clearly identified in curriculums, assessment is less effective. In these subjects, some teachers are not sufficiently trained to identify where pupils have developed gaps in their learning. This is because teachers do not know exactly what knowledge pupils are expected to remember. As a result, some pupils do not understand what they need to do to get better. They do not build on their previous learning as well as they could.

Leaders successfully prioritise reading. There is a range of strategies in place to promote a love and enjoyment of reading. Leaders have also started to identify pupils who are behind in their reading and they offer extra support from specialist staff. However, this support is not developed well enough to ensure that pupils in key stage 4 catch up quickly with their reading. This hinders their progress through the curriculum.

Pupils behave well and treat each other with respect. In lessons, pupils concentrate without learning being disrupted. Leaders engage with the local community to make sure positive behaviour is upheld in and out of school. Leaders foster a community that is tolerant, respectful and supportive.

Leaders have effective systems to identify pupils who may have SEND. They provide useful information for teachers about how this group of pupils should be supported with their learning. However, some pupils with SEND are absent from school too often. That said, leaders are taking the action required to reduce pupils' rates of absence.

Pupils said that they value the personal, social, health and economic education lessons that they receive. For example, they learn about how to have healthy relationships and how to stay safe online. Leaders prioritise pupils' mental health and well-being. For example, they have put into place an initiative that is designed to encourage boys to speak openly about their feelings. Pupils speak positively about this support.

A comprehensive and effective programme of careers information, advice and guidance means that pupils are well prepared for their next steps when they leave school.

Governors provide appropriate challenge and are supportive of leaders' recent curriculum changes to improve the quality of education for pupils. Staff appreciate leaders' actions to support their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding leaders know pupils' individual circumstances and work effectively with families to ensure that they receive the support they need. This includes working with external agencies where appropriate.

The curriculum is designed to raise awareness of safeguarding risks, including those related to online safety, sexual harassment and mental health. Staff are well trained and understand how to report safeguarding concerns. Leaders are continually developing policies and practices to ensure that they effectively manage risks and concerns to protect pupils.

Governors prioritise the safety of pupils and provide support and challenge, for example, through link governor visits to the school and external audits to ensure high quality provision.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not established the essential knowledge that pupils must learn in all subjects. As a result, some pupils do not gain the breadth and depth of knowledge that they need to achieve as highly as they should. Leaders should complete their curriculum thinking in all subjects so that teachers know exactly what content they must teach to pupils.
- Leaders' systems for checking on the quality of the curriculum are underdeveloped. They do not have a sufficiently deep understanding of how well teachers are delivering the subject content that underpins the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that their quality assurance systems establish how well the curriculum is being implemented across subjects and key stages.
- Not all teachers are using leaders' assessment systems to check how well pupils are learning the content of the curriculum. This issue is more problematic in subjects where leaders have not fully identified the content that teachers must teach. Some teachers do not know exactly what they should be assessing of pupils' learning. As a result, some pupils develop misconceptions that prevent them from building upon their prior learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers know exactly what content they should assess. Leaders should also ensure that teachers are well trained to use assessment strategies to identify and address any gaps in pupils' learning.
- Some pupils have gaps in their reading knowledge and while they receive support, it is sometimes not effective enough to help them to catch up with their peers. This hinders how well these pupils progress through the wider curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the support that they give to pupils who are behind in their reading is more successful in helping them to catch up quickly with their peers.

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	119792
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10212297
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	714
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Steve Marston
Headteacher	Philip Denton
Website	www.sbchs.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Catholic school. The last full inspection under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 took place in March 2017, with a monitoring visit in February 2020.
- The school makes use of one registered provider for small numbers of pupils.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection that the school has 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 met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and a range of staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the local authority and the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

- The lead inspector met with representatives from a group of volunteers who work with, and support, pupils pastorally at the school.
- As part of the inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, geography, physical education, modern foreign languages and art and design. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a sample of pupils' work and spoke with some pupils and teachers.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from a range of year groups. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour and spoke to pupils at social times.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, self-evaluation documents, external quality assurance documents and attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors checked on the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the recruitment checks made on staff. Inspectors met with leaders, staff, pupils and governors to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding in school. An inspector checked the arrangements for those pupils who attend alternative provision.

Inspection team

Amanda Downing, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nell Banfield	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Veitch	Ofsted Inspector
Thomas Fay	Ofsted Inspector

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