

# Inspection of Bolton St Catherine's Academy

Stitch-Mi-Lane, Bolton BL2 4HU

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Inspection dates: 27 and 28 September 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5  
of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders and staff promote a sense of belonging for pupils at Bolton St Catherine's Academy. Pupils feel safe. Most pupils are accepting of each other's differences. Pupils know who to speak with should they have any concerns. They are confident that staff will deal with any bullying incidents effectively.

Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the diverse range of extra-curricular activities that are on offer, such as sports and clubs. Pupils broaden their horizons through educational trips and visits, including to Ingleton Falls and the Isle of Man. Pupils recently enjoyed a visit by a Planetarium, which enhanced their knowledge of space physics. Each morning, pupils attend RISE (Recognition, Inspire, Support, Engagement) sessions, which helps them to settle in readiness for the rest of the day.

Leaders have raised their expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff and pupils reported that behaviour is improving. However, a minority of pupils in the secondary school continue to misbehave, both in class and at social times.

Leaders have introduced many changes that are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of education that pupils receive, especially in early years and in key stages 1 and 2. However, these improvements are not replicated in the secondary part of the school. Some secondary-aged pupils do not achieve well. A small minority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not have the opportunity to study a modern foreign language in key stage 3.

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

The curriculum is broad and balanced in the early years and in the primary school. However, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum in key stage 3 matches the scope or ambition of the national curriculum. This is because a small minority of pupils, including those with SEND, do not get the chance to study a modern foreign language.

Most subjects in the primary school are well designed. Leaders are in the process of developing the curriculum in the secondary school. In many subjects, leaders have identified the most important knowledge that they want pupils to learn. Leaders have given careful thought to the order that pupils learn this important knowledge. This helps to ensure that pupils' learning builds on what they already know. However, some subjects are at an earlier stage of development. In these subjects, leaders have not made sure that teachers are clear about what to teach and when to teach it. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Most teachers have secure subject knowledge. Teachers across the school check how well pupils have understood their learning. However, in the secondary school,

some pupils experience an uneven delivery of the curriculum. Some teachers design learning well. This helps pupils to build their understanding over time and achieve well. Elsewhere, teachers do not provide pupils with activities that help them gain a rich understanding of the subject that they study. Consequently, pupils, including those with SEND, lack the subject knowledge that they need to succeed across all subjects.

Leaders quickly identify the needs of pupils with SEND, including those children in the early years. Leaders make sure that pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND receive specialist support and care. Leaders provide teachers with appropriate information to support pupils with SEND. However, leaders have not been as successful in ensuring that this information is put to good use in some lessons. Some staff use this information well to support these pupils in lessons. However, this is not common across different classes or year groups. As a result, the achievement of pupils with SEND varies.

Reading is a high priority. Children learn phonics as soon as they start in the early years. Staff deliver the early reading and phonics programmes well. Pupils learn new sounds in a logical order. Most reading books are closely matched to the sounds that pupils have learned. Pupils who fall behind receive extra support from staff that helps them to catch up quickly. Children in the early years and pupils in the primary school read with increasing confidence and fluency.

Children in the early years enjoy listening to stories and reciting rhymes. They develop their language and communication skills well over time. They benefit from a well-designed curriculum that ensures they are ready for the next stage of their education.

Children in the early years and most pupils in the primary school listen and concentrate well in class. Leaders have improved the systems for managing pupils' behaviour in the secondary school. Many pupils behave well. However, some pupils do not behave as well as they should, in classrooms or around school.

Leaders have improved pupils' awareness of the importance of respecting and appreciating difference. They are taught about healthy relationships, including consent, in a timely manner. Pupils benefit from effective pastoral support. They receive impartial careers advice. Leaders support many pupils to access a range of apprenticeships.

Staff enjoy working at the school. Most feel that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being.

The chief executive officer (CEO), local governors and trustees are supportive of leaders and staff. They have increased the level of challenge that they provide to leaders. This has helped to move school forward in a positive direction. Trust leaders and local governors know what needs to improve and are already addressing weaknesses in the school's provision.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of vigilance at the school. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. This helps staff to be alert to any signs that pupils may be at risk from harm. Leaders follow up any concerns quickly with external agencies, including the local authority, to support vulnerable pupils. Leaders keep a close eye on the attendance of pupils. They raise concerns with other agencies when needed. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

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

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

- Currently, in key stage 3, a small minority of pupils, including some pupils with SEND, do not have the opportunity to follow a modern foreign language. This means that these pupils do not have access to as broad a range of subjects as the national curriculum intends. Leaders and governors should ensure that they provide opportunities for all pupils to study modern foreign languages in key stage 3 so that the school's curriculum reflects the ambitions of the national curriculum.
- In some subjects in the secondary school, the important knowledge that pupils should learn is not made clear. This means that pupils do not build their knowledge securely on what they already know. Subject leaders should ensure that they finalise their curriculum thinking so that teachers are clear about what they should be teaching and when this should take place. This will help pupils to know more and remember more.
- In the secondary school, some teachers do not deliver subject content effectively. This means that some pupils, including those pupils with SEND, do not learn as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers receive further training to build their subject expertise so that they can deliver their subject curriculums well. This will help pupils to build a rich body of knowledge.
- Some pupils in the secondary school disrupt the learning of others and misbehave during social times. Leaders should ensure that the school's behaviour policy is applied consistently well by all staff so that pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school.

## 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.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145314
<b>Local authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241426
<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1046
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Lesley Durosomo
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachael Lucas
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.boltonstcatherinesacademy.org.uk">www.boltonstcatherinesacademy.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Bolton St Catherine’s Academy converted to become an academy school in May 2018. When its predecessor school, Bolton St Catherine’s Academy, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be requires improvement overall.
- The school joined the Bishop Fraser Trust, a Church of England multi-academy trust, in May 2018.
- This is a Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection was in May 2018.
- The current headteacher took up post in September 2017. A significant number of other senior and subject leaders have joined the school in recent years.
- Recently, there have been significant changes to governance. This includes the appointment of a new chair and vice-chair of the local governing body.
- The sixth-form provision closed in August 2021.
- Leaders make use of five registered alternative providers and one unregistered provision for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and staff. Inspectors spoke with the CEO from the Bishop Fraser multi-academy trust, local governors and a trustee. An inspector held telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Manchester.
- Inspectors spoke to many pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including the school's single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in the school. An inspector held telephone calls with representatives from alternative providers.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation document, improvement plans, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, design technology, mathematics, modern foreign languages and science.
- For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector observed pupils reading to familiar staff.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses to the staff surveys and pupil surveys. An inspector spoke with parents and carers before the start of the school day to gather their views.

## Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Schelene Ferris	Ofsted Inspector
Collette Mather	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Jones	His Majesty's Inspector

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