

Inspection of Our Lady and St Gerard's Roman Catholic Primary School, Lostock Hall

Lourdes Avenue, Lostock Hall, Preston, Lancashire PR5 5TB

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years, are happy and safe. They enjoy coming to school. Pupils' behaviour is mostly positive and sensible, reflecting leaders' high standards. Pupils were proud to tell inspectors about the school's behaviour charter, which they recited with confidence. Pupils share the view that teachers deal well with bullying.

Pupils were delighted to meet with inspectors to talk about their learning. Pupils' efforts, as well as their achievements, are recognised by leaders and staff. This includes through the school's house point system. Pupils are also taught about the importance of respect. They are accepting of each other's differences. Pupils said, 'You don't have to be friends with everyone, but you have to be polite.'

Pupils gain new skills from the many opportunities that leaders and staff provide for their personal development. For example, they learn to play musical instruments and to develop new physical skills through a wide range of sporting activities.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' learning. Pupils achieve well in some subjects. However, they do not learn well in every subject. This is because the curriculum in some subjects, including in the early years, is not well thought out. Some pupils and children do not learn the knowledge that they need to be ready for the next stage in their education.

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

Leaders and governors have identified that the school's curriculum is underdeveloped. They have started to provide training and support for subject leaders, many of whom are new to the school. For example, leaders have successfully worked with the mathematics subject leader to improve the curriculum. This has resulted in pupils achieving better in mathematics than they did in the past. Nonetheless, pupils are not achieving as well as they should across the full range of different subjects.

Where subject leaders have carefully designed the curriculum, pupils achieve well. However, in some other subjects, leaders have not identified clearly enough the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. The same problem is found in the early years, particularly in the Nursery provision. As a result, some staff are unclear about what knowledge to teach and in which order. This means that some pupils and children do not learn as well as they should.

In addition to the weaknesses in curriculum design, some teachers do not think deeply enough about the most appropriate activities to select in order to support pupils' learning. Consequently, teachers miss opportunities to help pupils to remember key subject information.

Leaders are working effectively with staff to improve their systems for checking how well pupils are learning. Where the curriculum is well designed, staff are more aware of exactly what pupils should know and remember. Teachers spot and remedy errors in pupils' understanding more quickly. This approach benefits all pupils at the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Throughout the school, beginning in the Nursery class, children benefit from frequent access to a wide range of worthwhile fiction and non-fiction books. Many older pupils are skilled, confident readers who read widely and often. However, there are some inconsistencies in the teaching of early reading. This is because leaders have not ensured that all staff are equally well trained to deliver the phonics programme. Staff attempt to support pupils who struggle to read. However, not all staff do this effectively enough. This hinders how quickly some pupils learn to read.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND are identified accurately and quickly. Staff support pupils with SEND effectively, so that they can follow the same broad curriculum as their peers.

In the early years, children benefit from kind, gentle relationships with staff. Children know how to behave. However, some of the curriculum in the Nursery is not as well thought out as it should be. Nevertheless, by the end of the Reception Year, staff remedy the deficits in the Nursery curriculum. They ensure that most children in the Reception class are well prepared for the demands of Year 1.

Low-level disruption in classrooms is rare. This is because pupils are keen to learn. Pupils' positive behaviour and conduct mean that even when learning activities are lively, pupils are self-controlled and focused on their work.

Leaders and staff organise many different opportunities to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils understand fundamental British values and the importance of being a good citizen. Governors and leaders make sure that pupils learn about Britain's rich cultural heritage, including through school visits to the theatre and the ballet.

Governors identify the long-term priorities to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. They actively support the work of leaders and staff. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this work on the quality of the curriculum.

Leaders and governors keep a close eye on the workload of staff. Staff working at the school feel well supported by leaders. Parents and carers said that they welcome the frequent communication that they receive from leaders and staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors make sure that staff consider carefully how to keep pupils and their families safe. Through regular training, leaders and staff are well informed about potential local and national safeguarding risks to pupils.

Leaders and staff listen to what pupils say about their experiences and their worries. They focus their work often on supporting pupils' feelings and well-being. Leaders and staff record information carefully about any safeguarding concerns. Leaders make regular links with other agencies and take action to protect pupils from harm. Governors make regular, careful checks on the safeguarding work of the school. Leaders and governors use experts from outside of the school to provide additional challenge to leaders' work.

Pupils know how to stay safe and how to raise their concerns at school, as well as through national helplines.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, including in the early years, leaders have not considered the essential knowledge that pupils should learn. This hinders children's and pupils' achievement. Leaders should identify the most important subject knowledge that pupils should learn. This is so that pupils deepen their knowledge of subjects.
- In some areas of the curriculum, staff do not give enough thought to the pedagogical choices that they make to deliver subject content. This means that pupils do not build up a secure body of knowledge. Leaders should train staff to enable them to select the most appropriate activities to help pupils to remember the intended curriculum.
- Not all staff are sufficiently well trained to deliver the phonics programme. This hinders some pupils from developing a secure body of reading knowledge. Leaders should ensure that all teaching staff have the skills and knowledge that they need to teach phonics through the school's chosen phonics programme.

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

Unique reference number	119639
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10226245
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	351
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Kingswood
Headteacher	Kerry Harvey
Website	www.ourlady-st-gerards.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was new to post in September 2022. Several staff are new to the school in recent years.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2017.

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 completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, history and music. They met with subject leaders, visited learning

activities, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors also reviewed evidence for some other curriculum subjects.
- Inspectors met with leaders of early years, SEND, behaviour, safeguarding and family support.
- The lead inspector met with six members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors met with the local authority school adviser and with a representative of the Diocese of Salford.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. One inspector also spoke with some parents as they arrived at school with their children.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their work at the school and considered responses from staff to Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their education at the school and considered pupils' responses to Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors considered a range of information about the safeguarding of children and pupils, including leaders' checks on staff's suitability to work at the school.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Katie Hague	Ofsted Inspector
Gaynor Rennie	Ofsted Inspector

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