

Inspection of a good school: St Bernard's RC Primary School, Bolton

Wendover Drive, Ladybridge, Bolton, Lancashire BL3 4RX

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 November 2022

Outcome

St Bernard's RC Primary School, Bolton continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this kind, caring school. Every morning teachers greet pupils, parents and carers with a smile. Pupils feel happy and safe. They enjoy coming to school and look forward to what they are going to learn.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils' achievement, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils try their best and enjoy knowing that they are learning lots. They appreciate the many trips and experiences on offer to them, which enhance their learning.

Pupils live up to leaders' high expectations for their behaviour. They are polite and well behaved in lessons and at playtimes. Pupils feel confident about talking to a trusted adult if they have any concerns. They know that staff will listen to them. Leaders deal with any incidents of bullying swiftly should they occur.

Pupils readily assume a range of responsibilities, including being playtime buddies, peer mediators, eco team members, school councillors and house captains. They value being able to help each other, the community and the wider world. Pupils take these roles seriously and feel proud that they are able to make a difference, for example the enterprise club raises money for the local church community.

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

Leaders have created a broad and well-thought-out curriculum. In most subjects, leaders have identified exactly what they want children and pupils to learn. Leaders have carefully organised this knowledge, so that it builds in a logical way from the Reception class to Year 6. This helps pupils' learning to build over time. However, in a small number of subjects, leaders have not ensured that the essential knowledge that pupils must learn has been made clear enough to teachers. This means that some pupils do not build their learning effectively.

Teachers use assessment strategies effectively. For example, they start lessons with sticky quizzes to check how well pupils have remembered their previous learning. When they find any gaps in pupils' learning, teachers act swiftly to ensure that pupils get back on track.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. Children in the Reception class begin to learn phonics as soon as they start school. They learn to read using a well-structured phonics programme. Staff are well trained to deliver this programme effectively. Leaders ensure that books closely match the sounds that pupils know. If children in the early years and pupils in other classes struggle to read, leaders provide extra sessions to help them to catch up quickly. As a result, most pupils become confident and fluent readers by the time they enter key stage 2.

Teachers encourage older readers to read a broad range of quality texts. These pupils have a secure understanding of the value of reading and are enthusiastic about being readers. Pupils also enjoy listening to their teachers reading to them.

Leaders and teachers identify the needs of pupils with SEND early. Staff successfully use their expertise to meet pupils needs well. Teachers carefully adapt their delivery of the curriculum, so that pupils with SEND can access the same high-quality curriculum as their peers, with adaptations to ensure they succeed. Leaders make effective use of external agencies when needed.

Leaders teach pupils to be responsible and to help one another. Pupils are polite and respectful towards each other and to adults. Pupils work hard and their learning is not disrupted.

Pupils have a strong voice in the school. They elect their school councillors democratically, explaining why this is the right way to do things. House captains enjoy the work that they do when they lead activities across the school. The eco team are proud of their work, not only in the school community, but the way it feeds into national and international initiatives. For example, raising money to support work to remove rubbish from the sea.

Governors know the school well. They bring appropriate challenge and support to leaders. Staff feel valued. They know that leaders consider their workload when making decisions. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding. They understand how important it is to be vigilant. Staff know the pupils well and identify any small changes that may mean a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff know how to report concerns to school leaders. Leaders monitor pupils carefully and ensure that they put more support in place when needed.

Senior leaders involve other professionals when required, so that pupils and their families get the timely support that they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They keep their learning relevant through regular lessons on online safety. Pupils learn about being a good friend and how to develop healthy and trusting relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not made the knowledge that pupils must learn and remember clear enough to teachers. Consequently, pupils are not building on previous knowledge as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that the essential knowledge that pupils need to know and remember in each subject is sufficiently clear to teachers and organised well.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2017.

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	105230
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10240650
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	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Phil Ashcroft
Headteacher	Clare Doodson
Website	www.st-bernards.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in January 2020.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and a wide range of other staff.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their work and their wider school life.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation relating to safeguarding. She examined leaders' approach to safer recruitment. The inspector also spoke to staff

about their safeguarding knowledge and checked how well they understood their safeguarding responsibilities.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during playtimes and while in lessons.
- The inspector spoke with parents to gather views about the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. She spoke to the staff who lead these subject areas, visited lessons and spoke with teachers. She also spoke with pupils about their learning and viewed examples of their work. The inspector considered how leaders organise other subjects across the wider curriculum.
- The inspector observed pupils in key stages 1 and 2 read to a trusted adult.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Sarah Barraclough, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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