

Inspection of St Joseph's RC High School

Sefton Lane, Horwich, Bolton, Lancashire BL6 6HW

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils like attending St Joseph's RC High School. They feel happy, safe and secure here.

Leaders are ambitious for the academic achievement of the pupils that attend this school. Pupils benefit from the improvements that leaders have made to the quality of education. This helps the majority of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to experience and enjoy academic success.

Pupils are quick to embrace newcomers to their school. They understand and value peoples' differences. Staff resolve any bullying incidents quickly.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are clear about what is expected. Typically, classrooms are calm and orderly places. Pupils settle to their work and behave well in their lessons. However, there are too many pupils that do not behave as well as they should at social times or between lessons. This frustrates those pupils that enjoy a calmer and more orderly experience.

Leaders value what pupils tell them about the school. They want pupils to help shape the school's ongoing improvements. Plenty of pupils like and take up the opportunities they have to take on leadership roles in their school.

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

Senior leaders and governors lead this school with determination. They provide an ambitious and inclusive curriculum for pupils. Leaders have delivered much-needed improvements to subject curriculums and the way they are delivered and to the personal development curriculum. Overall, pupils, including those that are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND, achieve well.

Most subject leaders have decided upon the important knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order that this information should be taught. They want to make sure that pupils get to secure their current learning and build on what they already know.

Teachers usually deliver the intended subject curriculums well. This helps plenty of pupils grasp new learning straight away. Teachers' assessment of pupils' knowledge is typically effective. They check pupils' current understanding and memory of previous learning. Staff revisit knowledge where necessary until they are confident that pupils' learning is secure. Accordingly, pupils move on to new learning when they are ready, and not before.

Pupils with SEND tackle the same key curriculum knowledge as other pupils. Leaders are effective in identifying pupils with SEND. They make staff clear of the different

requirements of these pupils. Often, staff take the time to get to know pupils with SEND well. They help these pupils to succeed.

Leaders are committed to helping all pupils to read well. Leaders systematically identify younger pupils who find reading more difficult. Many of these pupils catch up and become confident and fluent readers. However, a few pupils do not catch up with their reading as quickly as others. Leaders have yet to provide access to a well-designed phonics programme for those pupils that need it.

Younger pupils get to read more often than in the past. There is still more to do to make sure that older pupils have sufficient opportunities to read regularly so that they become more fluent readers.

Most pupils are keen to do well in class. Their concentration in lessons helps them to learn and remember more. However, the behaviour of some pupils at social times, especially in the playground and between lessons means that the atmosphere in school is not as calm and orderly as it should be. A minority of pupils are boisterous. Some pupils discard litter. Some are also reluctant to get to lessons promptly.

Pupils benefit from a well-thought-out programme to support their personal development. They are taught about how they should conduct themselves. More and more of them enjoy the programme of enrichment activities that they are provided with. For example, they get to visit places of value and interest. Pupils are well prepared to understand and participate in modern Britain. They receive high-quality, independent careers advice and guidance.

Governors meet their statutory obligations. They use their expertise to help inform and secure improvement. They also hold leaders to account for the quality of education that pupils receive. Leaders respond to the needs of the school while considering the impact on workload and the well-being of staff.

Parents and carers would happily recommend the school to others.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders keep staff up to date with information about the dangers that pupils may face. Staff and the police officer linked to the school are quick to spot the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. They report any concerns in a timely way. These concerns are acted upon promptly. Leaders ensure that pupils and their families swiftly get the help that they need.

Pupils learn about risks to their safety, and how to spot and avoid them. They are confident and know how to seek help when they need it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not behave as well as they should at social times and between lessons. This has a negative impact on those pupils that prefer a calmer and more orderly school experience. Leaders need to take further steps to make sure that pupils behave well in the playground and throughout the school day so that all pupils benefit from a calm and orderly school.
- A few pupils do not catch up with their reading as quickly as they should. This is because they do not have sufficient access to a comprehensive phonics programme that would help them to develop their awareness of the links between letters and sounds and their reading fluency. Leaders should ensure that a suitable phonics programme is fully in place for those pupils who need it to develop their reading skills.
- Some older pupils do not read regularly enough. This means that they do not become fluent readers. Leaders need to finalise the reading curriculum so that all pupils get to read regularly and well.

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	105262
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10244609
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	1,039
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Patricia Jones
Headteacher	Tony McCabe
Website	www.stjosephsbolton.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 and 20 March 2019

Information about this school

- 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.
- This is a Catholic school. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2015.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at two registered external providers.

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 held meetings with senior leaders and subject leaders.

- The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the Diocese of Salford.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. Inspectors spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. Inspectors also asked pupils how they learn to keep themselves safe and what to do if they have any concerns.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups and considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, mathematics, physical education, science and Spanish. In these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered subject curriculums, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tuesday Humby	Ofsted Inspector
Osama Abdul Rahim	Ofsted Inspector
Craig Yates	Ofsted Inspector

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