

Inspection of St John's Catholic Primary School, Burscough

Chapel Lane, Lathom, Burscough, Lancashire L40 7RA

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to school, where they are happy and safe. They are highly respectful towards each other and staff and are welcoming towards visitors. Pupils are confident that they can talk to any member of staff if they have concerns. They understand that treating someone differently because of where they are from, or what they believe in, is wrong. If bullying occurs, leaders and staff deal with it quickly and effectively.

Leaders and staff expect pupils, and children in the early years, to behave well and to achieve highly. This helps to ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), perform well in different areas of the curriculum.

Pupils benefit from the many opportunities that they have to explore the natural world. They enjoy bird watching, participating in archaeological digs and carrying out small mammal surveys with local conservationists. Pupils like to support their community. Recently, they created flowerbeds for Burscough Railway Station.

Leaders enhance the curriculum. Pupils look forward to visiting local places of interest, including a wild bird sanctuary, an observatory and an art gallery. They also enjoy visits to museums. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from their annual residential learning in Todmorden.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum, which is delivered effectively. Across subjects, most teachers are clear about the knowledge and skills that pupils should learn and in what order. Teachers and teaching assistants bring learning to life in different ways. They provide 'hands-on' experiences, which enable pupils to apply their knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Staff's thoughtful approach to learning excites and engages pupils well.

Pupils' learning is consolidated and strengthened as they move through the early years and key stages 1 and 2. By the end of Year 6, pupils are well-prepared for their learning in high school and beyond.

Most teachers regularly check how well pupils are learning. Teachers also explain clearly what pupils need to learn and help them if they do not understand. However, in a few subjects, teachers' checks are not as thorough as they could be in identifying that some pupils are missing essential knowledge. Some teachers are new to the school and to their subject leader roles. As a result, they are developing their expertise. The support that they give to other teachers is not as effective as it could be. In these areas, the curriculum is not implemented consistently well.

Leaders want pupils to become avid readers. Pupils who spoke with the lead inspector about their reading, and who were heard to read, said that they loved so

many authors that it was 'difficult to pick one out'. Pupils enjoy different writing styles, including comedy, adventure and science fiction.

Leaders' phonics and early reading curriculums are implemented effectively by skilled staff. Children in the Reception class, and pupils in key stage 1, respond positively to phonics. They like to learn new letters, sounds and words. As a result of leaders' careful approach to early reading, pupils are developing their reading fluency quickly. Strong support is available for pupils in key stages 1 and 2 who find reading difficult. These pupils are developing their reading confidence well.

Leaders quickly identify pupils with SEND. They ensure that extra help is carefully planned to make certain that pupils with SEND do not miss any aspect of learning. Due to this, SEND pupils achieve well. Leaders work closely with external specialists, and parents and carers, to make certain that when needed, pupils with SEND get the help that they need promptly.

Pupils, and children in the Reception class, behave responsibly. They are also considerate. Pupils listen carefully in class and follow the rules. Due to this, lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders cater well for pupils' personal development. For example, staff help pupils to become responsible citizens. Pupils organise cake sales and sponsorship events to raise funds for different charities. They develop their leadership skills as librarians, school council members and play leaders. Pupils enjoy attending different clubs, including football, dodgeball and street dance clubs. They learn about tolerance and respect, and cultural and religious diversity, through different aspects of the curriculum. Pupils practise yoga. They know that learning well requires a healthy mind and body.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They told inspectors that leaders are mindful of their well-being and workload. Governors have a strong understanding of the school's strengths, as well as what it needs to do to improve further. Most parents are of the view that their children are happy and safe at school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors and leaders ensure that comprehensive safeguarding procedures are in place. Leaders regularly update staff on safeguarding matters. Leaders also make sure that staff are conversant with the latest government guidance on keeping pupils safe in education.

Staff adhere to the school's safeguarding policies. They know how to identify potential signs of neglect and/or abuse. Staff record and report any such concerns promptly.

Leaders work with different specialists to ensure that, if needed, pupils get the support that they need quickly. Staff help pupils to identify, and avoid, dangers and risks.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not routinely revisit and reinforce pupils' previous learning. As a result, they do not spot when pupils do not remember key information. Leaders should ensure that teachers regularly check how well pupils are learning the curriculum in all subjects. This will help teachers to establish what pupils know and can remember and if they need to resolve any misconceptions.
- A few subject leaders are developing their expertise. This restricts the quality of the support that they offer to other teachers in how to deliver the curriculum. Senior leaders should ensure that subject leaders have the help that they need to develop their skills. This will improve the quality of the support that subject leaders give to teachers in these areas of the curriculum.

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	119681
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10226321
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	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alex Rimmer
Headteacher	Elizabeth Devey
Website	www.burscough.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The school is a voluntary-aided Roman Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection was carried out on 6 February 2018.

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 the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Inspectors also held meetings with other leaders, including those responsible for SEND, the early years, attendance and pupils' behaviour, welfare and personal development.

- The lead inspector met with three governors. He held two telephone conversations. One with a representative from the local authority, the other with a representative from the Liverpool Archdiocese education department.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and design technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their learning in some other subjects. Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The lead inspector met with parents and reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He reviewed the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors spoke to safeguarding leaders about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents. Inspectors talked with pupils about their safety and welfare. Inspectors examined a range of policies and documents. They also scrutinised safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Schelene Ferris

Ofsted Inspector

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