

Inspection of St Bede's Roman Catholic High School, Blackburn

Green Lane, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 4SR

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. They said that they are happy and that they feel safe. Pupils are respectful of each other and the staff in the school. Sometimes pupils fall out. However, pupils, parents and carers told inspectors that when bullying does happen, staff deal with it effectively. Pupils know that staff will listen to them if they have any worries or concerns.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Classrooms and corridors are calm. Most pupils enjoy their learning and participate well in lessons. Teachers are equally ambitious for all pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

In some subjects, the curriculum has not been developed well enough. In these subjects, learning is not in the right order. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge that are not addressed effectively by staff. When this happens, pupils do not learn effectively as they move through the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of enrichment activities. Leaders ensure that these activities foster pupils' interests and talents. Pupils explained that they particularly enjoy sporting and debating clubs and activities. Pupils learn about alternative technology in the green power racing car club. There are also opportunities for pupils to take on leadership responsibilities on the school council.

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

Leaders have ensured that all pupils, including those with SEND, have access to a broad and ambitious curriculum. In some subjects, improvements to the curriculum have led to greater enjoyment and success for pupils, for example in modern foreign languages. As a result, more pupils choose to study a modern foreign language than they did in the past. This means that the proportion of pupils who study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects has increased considerably over time.

In some subjects, leaders have identified the essential knowledge that pupils must learn. They have thought carefully about the order in which this knowledge should be taught. This helps pupils to build their learning securely over time. In these subjects, teachers use assessment strategies well to identify any gaps or misconceptions in pupils' learning. Teachers reshape their teaching effectively to help pupils recap on any learning that they may have missed or forgotten.

In other subjects, leaders have not identified the small building blocks of knowledge that pupils must know and remember. This prevents teachers from designing learning that helps pupils to build their knowledge securely over time. Teachers are less effective in checking pupils' learning in these subjects. Gaps go unnoticed. As a result, pupils' achievement is uneven overall.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with SEND. The needs of these pupils are identified quickly and accurately. Leaders have developed individualised learning programmes to ensure that the needs of this group of pupils are being met effectively. Leaders ensure that teachers receive information and guidance to support pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils can access the curriculum successfully.

Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Leaders provide time for teachers to work together to decide on the best way to teach topics in the curriculum. Most staff use this expertise to deliver the curriculum well. Where the curriculum is well designed, teachers explain difficult ideas well so that pupils deepen their understanding.

Leaders' systems to identify pupils who struggle to read are effective. Well-trained staff support these pupils well so that they can catch up quickly. Pupils are encouraged to read through form time activities and the use of the library. Pupils are now reading a wider range of books than they did previously.

Around the school, pupils conduct themselves well. They wear their uniform with pride. Pupils follow school routines diligently and they are punctual to lessons. They said that it is rare that learning is disrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders have developed a comprehensive programme of study to support pupils' personal development. These lessons provide pupils with opportunities to discuss a wide range of topical issues. Leaders make suitable use of external experts to talk to pupils about some aspects of their personal development. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about British values, the dangers of prejudice and the impact of social media.

Leaders provide pupils with age-appropriate sex, relationships and health education. Leaders also ensure that pupils receive high-quality independent careers advice. Pupils have suitable opportunities to meet with local employers and to visit further education and sixth-form colleges in the local area.

Staff said that they are proud to work at the school. They explained that leaders value them and appreciate the work that they do. Staff said that leaders are mindful of their workload. They are happy working here.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide regular safeguarding training for staff. Frequent updates keep staff aware of the most recent safeguarding developments, including those in the local area. Staff know how to spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They are prompt in sharing any concerns with leaders.

Leaders have made strong links with local external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families get the timely help that they need. Leaders

monitor this support frequently and make appropriate adjustments as the needs of the child change.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through their lessons and well-thought-out assemblies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the essential knowledge that pupils must know and remember. This prevents teachers from designing learning that helps pupils to build on their knowledge securely over time. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking so that teachers know exactly what to teach and when.
- In some subjects, leaders have not ensured that teachers use assessment strategies sufficiently well to identify gaps or misconceptions in pupils' knowledge. This means that pupils' understanding is not secure. They are unable to build their learning effectively over time. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment techniques to help pupils know and remember more over time.

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	119793
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10256072
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,057
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Helen Arrowsmith
Headteacher	Daniel Milton
Website	www.stbedesblackburn.com
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the governors have appointed a new headteacher.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at three registered providers.
- The school was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 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 met with the headteacher, other school leaders, a range of teaching and support staff, the chair of the governing body, a representative from the diocese and a representative of the local authority.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in geography, English, science, Spanish and design technology. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited some lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils and teachers. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from key stages 3 and 4. Inspectors also observed breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, the school development plans, leaders' self-evaluation documents, and behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding procedures. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding in school. An inspector also checked the arrangements for pupils attending alternative provision.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Erica Sharman, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Eleanor Overland

His Majesty's Inspector

Alan Hammersley

Ofsted Inspector

Derek Yarwood

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023