

Inspection of St Bede Academy

Morris Green Lane, Bolton, Lancashire BL3 3LJ

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 October 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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Anna Black. This school is part of the Quill Church of England Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sarah Bagshaw, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Michael Caine.

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Bede Academy as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at school. They know that they have a voice and that adults listen to them. Pupils are eager to drive positive change in the community. For example, they are keen to engage with politicians to bring about improvements to their local area. Pupils are proud of their recent campaign to increase the number of accessible green spaces close to the school. In this way, pupils are well prepared to be responsible citizens.

Pupils uphold the 'St Bede Way'. They care about others and organise a wealth of fundraising activities for their chosen charities. Pupils take on positions of responsibility enthusiastically because they want to make a difference. For example, pupils who act as 'mini mentors' enjoy helping others to solve problems.

Pupils know exactly how staff expect them to behave. They follow the school's 'seven Ss' by moving around the building sensibly and with a ready smile. In this way, pupils help to create a quiet and orderly environment.

Pupils understand that they are expected to give their best in lessons. They rise to the school's high expectations of their achievement. They listen attentively and show respect to their teachers and to each other. Pupils across the school typically achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

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

With the support and guidance of the trust, the school has revitalised its curriculum over recent years. The school values its staff and prioritises their ongoing training. Staff appreciate the school's efforts to ensure that workload has been manageable during this time of focused curriculum development.

Starting in the early years, the school has purposefully designed pupils' learning to build well from year to year in all subjects. However, in a small number of subjects, the school has not checked sufficiently well that revised curriculums are being implemented as intended. In these subjects, the curriculum is not delivered as effectively as it is in others. Some pupils' knowledge is uneven in these subjects as a result.

In most subjects, the school's approaches to assessment are well established. Staff make effective checks to find out what pupils have remembered and understood. They use this information well to quickly spot and address pupils' misconceptions and adapt future teaching. In these subjects, pupils have frequent opportunities to revisit earlier learning so that they do not forget it. They recall knowledge fluently as a result. However, in a small number of subjects, staff's checks on pupils' learning are not as effective. This means that staff do not identify well enough what pupils have understood and remembered over time in these subjects. Occasionally, this limits staff's ability to adjust future teaching to take account of gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Throughout the early years, staff interact skilfully with children to develop their communication and language. Children learn to use an increasingly wide range of vocabulary. They are introduced to phonics as soon as they join the Reception class. Staff are experts in teaching early reading. They make sure that pupils practise their reading using books that match the sounds that they have learned. Most pupils secure a strong knowledge of phonics. Staff provide prompt help for pupils who are behind with their phonics knowledge to support them to catch up quickly. This means that pupils learn to read confidently and fluently in readiness for key stage 2.

Staff throughout the school are attuned to pupils' different needs. They identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND swiftly and accurately. Staff use their expertise to make careful adaptations to their delivery of the curriculum to enable these pupils to learn well alongside their classmates.

The school's programme to support pupils' personal development is well thought out. Pupils embrace the wide range of experiences on offer to them. These opportunities include trips and visits to places of artistic and cultural significance, such as galleries and museums.

The personal, social and health education curriculum mirrors the strengths found in other subjects. It is carefully designed to build pupils' knowledge in an age-appropriate way from the early years to Year 6. Pupils learn how to develop healthy relationships, including online. They understand that they live in a diverse society.

Pupils show care and compassion for others. They display positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. This is reflected in their regular attendance at school.

The school involves parents and carers in their children's education effectively. For instance, parents enjoy and value regular 'stay and play' sessions. They also appreciate the guidance that they receive to support their children's reading. This includes access to a wide range of reading materials.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school does not ensure that checks on pupils' learning provide teachers with the information that they need to identify and address pupils' missing or insecure knowledge. This means that some pupils' misunderstandings or gaps in knowledge occasionally go unchecked. The school should ensure that staff check exactly what pupils know and understand so that they learn more effectively over time.

- The school has not put in place strong enough systems to assure the quality of the curriculum in a small number of subjects. As a result, there is some unevenness in how well the curriculum is implemented in these subjects. The school should check that teachers are delivering subject curriculums equally well and provide appropriate support where this is not the case.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136889
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10255993
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	647
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Caine
CEO of the trust	Sarah Bagshaw
Headteacher	Anna Black
Website	www.stbedeacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy school in July 2011. There have been several changes to leadership and governance since this time. The current headteacher took up post in September 2022.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school is part of the Quill Church of England Trust. The trust has recently changed its name and was formerly known as the St Bede Church of England Multi-Academy Trust.
- This school is part of the Diocese of Manchester. Its most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in March 2023. Its next section 48 inspection is expected to take place within five years.
- The school has increased in size since becoming an academy school. It is now a three-form entry school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the CEO and other leaders in school. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- An inspector met with trustees and members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and English, mathematics, art and design, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- An inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Andy Reidel	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Dickinson	Ofsted Inspector
Lenford White	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