

# Inspection of a good school: St John the Evangelist RC Primary School

Darwen Road, Bromley Cross, Bolton, Lancashire BL7 9HT

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Inspection dates:

24 and 25 January 2024

## **Outcome**

St John the Evangelist RC Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are quickly welcomed into a warm and caring school community. They treat each other with kindness. For example, at breaktimes, pupils are quick to spot if someone is alone and to ask them to join in. This helps pupils to feel happy.

The school wants the best for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most pupils enjoy their learning. They typically rise to the school's high expectations and achieve well.

Pupils are polite and respectful towards adults and to each other. Well-established routines help to ensure that they behave sensibly. The atmosphere around the school is calm and purposeful.

Pupils blossom as they take on positions of responsibility. For example, the 'seeds and gardeners' programme matches Year 6 pupils with children in the early years. The older pupils take seriously their responsibility of helping their 'seed' to grow. They beamed with pride as they described the ways in which they help and encourage their younger partners.

Pupils develop a varied range of hobbies and interests. For instance, they enjoy taking part in gardening club and playing 'glow in the dark' dodgeball. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about showcasing their talents at an annual 'St John's Got Talent' event.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum for pupils. Staff seek out ways to enhance classroom learning through trips and visits. For example, pupils recalled vividly a workshop about the Stone Age that helped to bring their learning to life.

The curriculum is well organised. It is very clear what pupils should learn and when subject content should be taught. Important vocabulary is identified within each subject

curriculum and is emphasised by teachers during lessons. This helps to support the increasing number of pupils in the school who speak English as an additional language.

In most subjects, the school has identified precisely the essential knowledge that pupils should acquire so that their learning builds securely over time. Where this is the case, pupils revisit this important knowledge frequently. Teachers act swiftly when they identify any gaps in pupils' learning. In these subjects, pupils typically learn well.

In some other subjects, and some areas of learning in the early years, the important knowledge for pupils to remember is less clearly defined. This means that teachers do not know which information to emphasise when they revisit and check pupils' learning. In these subjects, some pupils do not build their knowledge as well as they should.

The school understands that reading well provides a firm foundation from which pupils can access the wider curriculum. Pupils enjoy selecting challenging books to read from suggested class texts. Careful thought has been given to ensuring that these books reflect the diversity of modern Britain.

Children learn phonics from the beginning of the Reception class. Staff identify pupils who fall behind and ensure that they receive help to catch up with the phonics programme. However, staff do not consistently address occasions when pupils do not use pure letter sounds. This slows the progress of some pupils, particularly those who find reading more difficult, towards becoming accurate and confident readers.

The school has appropriate processes in place to identify any additional needs that pupils may have. Teachers are provided with carefully considered information about the support and resources that will help these pupils to access the curriculum. In the main, pupils with SEND learn well during their time at the school.

Pupils learn a wealth of information to prepare them well for life in modern society. They have a secure understanding of diversity, and they respect differences between themselves and others. Pupils think about how they can contribute to their school and the wider community. For example, school councillors were proud of the action that they had taken to reduce litter on the school playground. Other pupils participate in charitable activities in the local area.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Children in the Reception class quickly learn routines that promote positive behaviour. Across the school, pupils are attentive to their teachers. They are eager to participate during lessons. Most pupils have high levels of attendance.

Staff enjoy working at the school. In the main, they feel well supported. Staff appreciated being consulted about the school's approach to giving pupils feedback in each subject.

Governors are strong advocates for the school. They are well informed about the curriculum. Governors are committed to working with the school to continue to refine the quality of education that it provides for pupils.

## 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 has not ensured that teachers are clear enough about the knowledge that pupils should remember to help them with subsequent learning. This makes it difficult for teachers to help pupils to remember important content. The school should clarify the essential knowledge that pupils should acquire so that they build a deep and interconnected body of knowledge in these subjects.
- When delivering the phonics programme, some staff do not ensure that pupils consistently use pure letter sounds. This hinders some pupils from developing their phonics knowledge as rapidly as they should. The school should ensure that staff receive the training that they need to identify and address any misconceptions in pupils' phonics knowledge swiftly.

## 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 October 2014.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105249
<b>Local authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10294217
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	183
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Amy Marie Cowen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lesley Jackson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-johns-bromley-cross.bolton.sch.uk">www.st-johns-bromley-cross.bolton.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This Roman Catholic School is in the Diocese of Salford. The school's last section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character was in December 2015. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place before the end of this academic year.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff.
- The inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority and of the diocese.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. She met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed some samples of pupils' work and spoke with staff and pupils. The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar member of staff. She spoke with some pupils about their reading.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- The inspector met with pupils to ask about their experience of school. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey to consider.
- The inspector met with groups of staff. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of evidence, including records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.

### **Inspection team**

Sally Rix, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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