

Inspection of Sacred Heart R.C. Primary School

Central Drive, Westhoughton, Bolton, Lancashire BL5 3DU

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school experience learning in a wonderful way. Their attitudes and conduct consistently embody the school's motto to 'love one another'. Pupils are happy and look forward to school each day. Across the school there is a calm atmosphere that enables pupils to focus completely on their learning.

Pupils relish the vast range of opportunities to learn. Every part of the school grounds and buildings are used to enhance learning. For example, the school farm and pond help pupils to deepen their understanding in science. Kit cars produced by the pupils in design and technology, and theatre costumes produced in art and design, are displayed with pride.

The school has exceptionally high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those who are disadvantaged, consistently live up to or exceed these expectations. They shine in all that they do. This is reflected in the exceptional quality of work that pupils produce. Pupils across the school achieve remarkably well.

Pupils take full advantage of the vast array of enrichment activities that are on offer to them. For example, they benefit from carefully programmed trips to local venues and older pupils visit places further afield, such as Lindisfarne and France.

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

The school is extremely ambitious for pupils, including those with SEND. It has carefully mapped out the important knowledge that pupils should learn at each stage and in each subject. This broad and balanced curriculum flows seamlessly from the beginning of the early years to the end of Year 6.

Many school staff are specialist teachers in their fields. They ensure that staff receive bespoke, high-quality training that enables them to design curriculum content extremely well. This also helps to ensure that the curriculum is delivered exactly as intended.

Staff are adept at swiftly identifying pupils' misconceptions and misunderstandings. They use the school's assessment strategies well to identify where pupils may have gaps in their knowledge and to shape their future learning. Over time, pupils develop a deep body of knowledge that interconnects between subjects.

Children start learning phonics as soon as they begin in the Reception Year. They practise their reading using books that are carefully matched to the sounds that they know. Staff check that pupils are keeping up with the phonics programme. If pupils struggle with reading, skilled staff provide effective support to help them to catch up quickly. Most pupils become confident and fluent readers by the end of Year 2.

The school has successfully cultivated a love of reading. Older pupils talked enthusiastically about their favourite authors. They enjoy practising their reading in the 'vardo' on the playground.

Pupils are polite, friendly and eager to converse with adults. They are proud of their school. It is a place where showing kindness and caring about one another is the norm. Pupils' rates of attendance are high. They understand the importance of attending school each day. Where needed, the school works in partnership with external professionals and families to reduce pupils' absence effectively.

Staff have been trained to quickly identify the additional needs that pupils may have. To secure appropriate support for pupils, staff work collaboratively with parents, carers and external agencies. Staff are skilled at making necessary adaptations to their delivery of the curriculum. This enables pupils with SEND to learn successfully.

The way that the school develops pupils' character is praiseworthy. Every aspect of the curriculum is brought to life by practical activities or visits, for example through digital designers, poets and artists in residence. Through their extensive work on human rights, pupils have a well-developed understanding of the differences between people and a secure knowledge of fundamental British values. Pupils take part actively in community fundraising events. They learn how to keep themselves safe online and how to stay physically and mentally healthy.

Pupils take pride in their roles of responsibility. These include positions such as members of pupil parliament, creative ambassadors, apostles and subject champions.

Governors know the school well. Their decisions are rooted in making sure that pupils have as many opportunities to flourish as possible. They carry out their duties effectively and hold the school to account fully for the quality of education that pupils receive.

Staff were overwhelmingly positive about how the school takes their workload and well-being into consideration. For example, they value the wealth of training that they receive and say that this enables them to deliver the curriculum with confidence and pride.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	105243
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10294215
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	422
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Claire Walker
Headteacher	Martin Johnson
Website	www.sacred-heart.bolton.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 March 2012 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Catholic primary school within the Diocese of Salford. The last section 48 inspection took place in April 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due in the 2024/25 academic year.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school manages a breakfast and after-school club.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders and staff.

- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, art and design, computing and music. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects. They met with leaders, spoke with pupils and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a trusted adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Ruth Moran, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Shoab Uddin

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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