

Inspection of St Gabriel's Church of England Primary School

Wilworth Crescent, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 8QN

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 April 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 11 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this happy and harmonious school. They enjoy their learning and spending time with friends. Pupils value opportunities to participate in clubs that extend their talents and interests. This includes producing the school newspaper, as well as an assortment of music and sports clubs.

Pupils swiftly develop warm and trusting relationships with staff. They behave well, treating one another with kindness and respect. In the Reception class, children quickly adapt to the routines and expectations of school. They share, take turns and learn how to be a 'fantastic friend' to their peers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive in the calm and welcoming atmosphere. The school fosters an ambitious yet supportive environment that is aspirational for the achievement of all. As a result, pupils achieve well.

Pupils are active contributors to the school community. For example, in their roles as school councillors, pupils have a voice in how the school is run. Year 6 'gardeners' take responsibility for a 'seedling' from the Reception class, acting as a positive role model and mentor. This helps children in the early years to quickly feel part of wider school life.

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

The school has designed an effective curriculum. It has clearly identified the knowledge and vocabulary that it wants pupils to learn. Through regular training, teachers are equipped with high levels of expertise across the breadth of the curriculum. They design learning that extends and deepens pupils' knowledge. They regularly identify what pupils know and can do, providing targeted support where needed. This is particularly the case in the early years, where staff take every opportunity to develop children's understanding through group work, discussion and play. As a result, children in the early years achieve exceptionally well.

Teachers are typically adept at checking that pupils have learned all that they should. They skilfully identify and address misconceptions that would otherwise hinder pupils' learning. However, in one or two subjects, pupils are less well supported to remember their learning over time. In these subjects, some pupils do not develop a secure body of knowledge. This is because they struggle to recall and build on their previous learning.

Pupils develop into confident, fluent and accurate readers. They talked enthusiastically about the books that they have enjoyed, including those that their teachers share with them. Children joining the Reception class start to learn phonics quickly. Well-trained staff deliver this programme with expertise. Pupils in key stage 1 practise reading frequently, using books that feature the sounds that they already know. Staff regularly check on pupils' reading knowledge and provide suitable

additional help to any that are struggling. This helps these pupils to learn all that they should.

The school accurately identifies pupils with SEND. Teachers ensure that these pupils receive the support that they need to progress through the curriculum well.

A small number of pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. They miss out on important learning. In some cases, the school has not acted swiftly enough to ascertain and address the barriers that hamper pupils' regular attendance. This has hindered its efforts to reduce pupils' absences.

The school is calm and orderly. In classrooms, staff create a positive environment that encourages pupils' self-belief and resilience. They inspire children to love learning and to be curious about the world around them. In the Reception class, staff are highly effective in supporting children to develop their confidence and independence. Children are well primed for success in their future learning.

Pupils benefit from a broad and rich programme that supports their personal development. They learn how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy, and how to stay safe, including when online. The school adapts the programme to respond to topical issues that arise, whether in school, locally or nationally. Pupils enjoy a range of educational visits that bring their learning to life.

Pupils display a strong knowledge of fundamental British values, such as democracy, respect and tolerance. The school welcomes and celebrates the diversity of religious and cultural groups within its community. For example, it is beginning to increase the range of cultures and ethnicities that are represented in the books that pupils encounter. This helps pupils from different backgrounds to relate to similar characters in literature.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They fulfil their statutory duties and provide suitable support to the school and its close-knit staff team. Staff enjoy working here. They are appreciative of the lengths that the school goes to to support their well-being. Staff feel that they have the time that they need to carry out their roles well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the school does not provide enough support to help pupils to remember their learning over time. This means that some pupils find it difficult to connect new learning to what they have learned before. The

school should ensure that pupils are well supported to recall and develop their knowledge, so that they can build up a broad understanding of these subjects.

- Some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. This means that they miss out on valuable opportunities for learning and play. The school should ensure that it works with parents and carers to identify and address any issues that cause pupils to be absent unnecessarily.

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	119501
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10314013
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	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Norman Reeve
Headteacher	Belinda Haigh
Website	www.stgabrielssch.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 March 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Blackburn. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in September 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection is due to take place by the end of 2025.

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 met with senior leaders, including the headteacher and a range of staff. They also spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation documents, improvement plans and minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors also reviewed records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- 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 pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some staff and pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Charlotte Oles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rachel Pars

Ofsted Inspector

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