

Inspection of a good school: St John the Baptist RC Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

Thames Avenue, Burnley, Lancashire BB10 2PZ

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 May 2024

Outcome

St John the Baptist RC Primary School, a Voluntary Academy continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Helen Bibby. This school is part of Romero Catholic Academy 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), Des Callaghan and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Angela Ager.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are welcomed each day into a caring and supportive community at this school. They feel happy and they appreciate the opportunities that the school creates for them. If they have any worries or concerns, they know how to access help and support. They trust the adults who work with them. This helps them to feel safe and ensures that they can focus on their learning.

Pupils understand the clear expectations that the school sets for their achievement. In lessons, pupils access a broad and engaging curriculum. They work hard and achieve well.

Pupils treat each other with kindness. They are taught to respect the differences that exist between people in society. This creates a positive school atmosphere where pupils can learn in calm classroom environments.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from a wealth of opportunities to develop themselves beyond the academic curriculum. For example, they take part in regular well-being events with their families, attend film festivals and take part in debates. They enjoy clubs and activities such as archery and gardening. These enrichment experiences help them to develop their confidence and understanding of the local community and the wider world.

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

In recent years, the school has made considerable improvements to the design and delivery of the curriculum. The curriculum is ambitious. It is designed to rouse pupils' interests and meet their needs. In addition, teachers believe that the changes to curriculum policies have had a positive impact on their work-life balance. This has helped them to carry out their roles more effectively.

Across a broad range of subjects, the school has spent time identifying the most important subject-specific knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which it should be taught. The school has carefully considered how the curriculum in the Reception class will enable children to build the foundations that they need to learn more as they move through key stages 1 and 2. However, at times, teachers' delivery of the curriculum is more effective in some subjects than in others. On occasion, teachers place too much emphasis on the tasks and activities that pupils complete, rather than ensuring that these activities will help children gain the knowledge that they need. This hampers some pupils from learning as much as they could.

The school identifies pupils with SEND effectively. Teachers receive helpful information about the specific needs of pupils so that they can adapt the delivery of the curriculum successfully. Pupils with SEND receive help and external support when needed. They access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers and they achieve well.

Teachers receive regular training so that they maintain a high level of subject-specific knowledge. They regularly recap learning to help pupils remember what they have been taught. In most subjects, teachers use assessment strategies well to check pupils' understanding and address their misconceptions. However, in a small number of subjects, teachers are less well equipped to spot gaps in pupils' learning. This prevents some pupils from building securely on their prior learning when new concepts are introduced.

The school ensures that reading sits at the centre of the curriculum. Pupils access the school libraries, take part in regular reading competitions and enjoy daily reading activities. The school has successfully introduced a new phonics programme. From the start of the Reception Year, children develop confidence and competence as early readers. They read books that match the sounds that they are learning. Well-trained staff help pupils to build effectively upon this reading knowledge throughout key stage 1 and 2. Extra support is provided for any pupils who fall behind in the phonics programme and for those who join the school mid-year or arrive from another country. As a result, most pupils, including those with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language, learn to read fluently.

Typically, pupils attend school regularly and they behave well. From the start of the Reception Year, the school establishes clear routines that children in the early years and pupils in key stages 1 and 2 follow diligently. Older pupils act as buddies for children in the early years and they take on roles as school ambassadors to uphold school's expectations and daily routines.

Pupils are provided with strong support for their social and emotional well-being. They experience a wide-ranging programme of activities to promote their personal development and prepare them well for life in modern Britain. For example, they regularly debate differing moral and religious values, receive visitors and guest speakers in school, visit places of interest and take part in community projects and competitions.

The trust effectively delegates and checks on the responsibilities that are held by school leaders at all levels. The local governing body is actively involved in the day-to-day life of the school. Strong systems are in place to ensure that important information is shared regularly with governors and trustees. They use this information to appropriately challenge and support the school when making decisions.

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 few subjects, some teachers do not choose activities that will best support pupils to learn the intended curriculum well. This means that some pupils do not secure or deepen their knowledge in each topic. The school should check that teachers design learning tasks that enable pupils to build their knowledge in depth over time.
- In some subjects, the strategies that the school has devised to check on pupils' learning are underdeveloped. This hinders how well teachers are able to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. Some pupils are not supported to build on their prior learning as well as they could be. The school should refine these assessment strategies so that teachers can help pupils to build their subject-specific knowledge more securely.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St John the Baptist RC Primary School, to be good in January 2018.

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	147578
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10314054
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Angela Ager
CEO of the trust	Des Callaghan
Headteacher	Helen Bibby
Website	www.stjohnsrcprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St John the Baptist RC Primary School, a Voluntary Academy, converted to become an academy school in December 2019. When its predecessor school, St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- A new headteacher, who was previously the deputy headteacher, has recently been appointed.
- This is a Catholic school in the diocese of Salford. The last section 48 inspection took place in June 2017. The next one is due during the 2024/25 academic year.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

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 have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with representatives of the trust board and the CEO of the trust. She also met with representatives of the local governing body, including the chair of the local governing body.
- The inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative of the Diocese of Salford.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive the inspector 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. The inspector observed pupils reading with a familiar adult. The inspector also looked at samples of pupils' work from a range of other subjects.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free text comments.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. She met with a range of staff throughout the inspection to gather their views.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. She met with a range of pupils from different year groups to gather their views about school life. The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- 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

Amanda Downing, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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