

Inspection of St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, Lancaster

Bowerham Road, St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, Lancaster, Lancashire LA1 4HT

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 May 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

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since February 2012.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this happy and friendly school. Their attitudes to learning are exceptional. Pupils are proud of the work that they are doing, and they are keen to share what they have learned. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They relish coming to school.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Distractions to learning are incredibly rare. Pupils are respectful to each other and adults. Their impeccable manners shine through. At playtimes pupils play happily together. Older pupils are wonderful role models for younger children.

The school has extremely high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These expectations are fully realised. From the early years, children demonstrate their passion for learning and develop the strategies required to help them to achieve well. These strong attitudes to learning continue to develop as pupils move through the school. Pupils achieve highly across the curriculum.

Pupils learn to think deeply about how they can help others. This starts with the people in their school and extends to the local community and then the wider world. Pupils take this seriously and they are proud that they can make a difference in society. The school provides an exciting and broad range of experiences to enhance the curriculum exceptionally well.

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

The school has designed a curriculum which is interesting, ambitious and provides pupils with the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed in the future. Across the curriculum, the school has carefully identified each small step of learning. There are strong links to prior learning, which helps pupils to build on what they already know.

Teachers are clear about what they need to teach and how it fits into pupils' overall learning journey. Children in the early years show perseverance and tenacity in their learning. Across the school, pupils build their knowledge extremely well. They can remember what they have learned with ease. Pupils are particularly well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, and they teach with flair and confidence. They know exactly what pupils have learned before and what will come next. Teachers select a variety of activities to check carefully that pupils have remembered and securely understood previous learning. Teachers address pupils' misconceptions straight away.

Reading is central to all elements of the curriculum in this school. Pupils take great pleasure in listening to stories, which the school has chosen to inspire them as well

as appeal to their interests. Staff are experts in teaching reading. They ensure that children start to learn phonics as soon as they start in the Reception class. Children listen intently and make excellent progress. They are keen to use their phonics knowledge in their writing. If a pupil needs additional support, staff ensure that this happens and that it is highly effective. As a result, most pupils are reading fluently by the time that they enter key stage 2.

Support for pupils with SEND is phenomenal. The school identifies pupils' needs quickly and puts appropriate, effectual support in place. Skilled staff ensure that pupils with SEND work towards the same curriculum goals as their peers. A range of adaptations are in place to help pupils with SEND to achieve extremely well. These pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life. They are proud that they can celebrate their differences and they know how deeply valued they are.

From the early years, children learn how to be kind and show forgiveness to one another. Teachers invest in helping children to understand how their actions affect others. As they move through school, pupils behave in accordance with the school's values. This is demonstrated by the mature attitudes that pupils have and the care and compassion that they show to one another.

The school's offer for pupils' personal development is exceptionally well designed. Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences, for example through trips out and visitors into school. This helps them to understand their place in society and gives them opportunities to become courageous and thoughtful citizens. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and they are proud to represent the school in a range of ways.

The school takes every care to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to develop their talents. For instance, the school's brass band epitomises the excellent use of expert tuition offered to all pupils. Pupils appreciate the support that they can get for their own well-being, including using the wise owl to share any worries.

The school is passionate about providing the best educational experience for all pupils. Equally, the school places high priority on supporting staff's well-being. The school ensures that staff are fully equipped to carry out their roles effectively. Workload is considered when changes to policies are implemented. Staff are immensely proud to work at the school.

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	119584
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10294328
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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Wyre
Headteacher	Donna Shoulder
Website	www.st-bernadettes.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 February 2012, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- This Catholic primary school is part of the Diocese of Lancaster. The last section 48 inspection took place in June 2023. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in four years.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.

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 that 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.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff.
- Inspectors met with governors. An inspector held telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. 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 considered the curriculum in other subject areas.
- Inspectors observed pupils read to a trusted adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during playtimes and while in lessons.
- 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 considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors met with parents and carers to gather their views and opinions about the school.

Inspection team

Sarah Barraclough, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Cole

Ofsted Inspector

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