

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Antony's RC Primary School

Shadsworth Road, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 2HP

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 November 2024

Outcome

St Antony's RC Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and proud to belong to their school. They flourish, growing in confidence, within the school's nurturing and welcoming environment. Pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from the support of skilled and caring staff.

Pupils are kind and considerate of others. They focus on their learning during lessons and behave well. Older pupils are keen to help children in the early years settle quickly through 'gardeners and seeds' activities. Pupils willingly take part in the many local and international projects that the school supports.

Pupils readily contribute to the school's positive ethos, where all pupils are expected to try their best. For example, pupils selected as role models or play leaders make sure that others remember to 'shine' while walking down the corridor or playing together at breaktimes. Pupils who have earned the right to wear a golden tie for personal achievement do so with delight. They encourage others to step out of their comfort zone and challenge themselves.

Pupils respond with enthusiasm to the school's high aspirations for them. Pupils typically achieve well across the curriculum. They are amply prepared for their next stages of education.

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

The school has continued to develop and further strengthen its curriculum since the previous inspection. It focuses on ensuring that all pupils receive the support that they

need to achieve as well as possible. Governors work closely with the school and provide effective challenge and support in this endeavour.

Teachers deliver the school's ambitious curriculum with consistency. They typically support pupils well to build knowledge securely and quickly. Pupils recall much of their learning with ease. They make effective use of what they have learned before to make sense of new information.

The school is adept at identifying and addressing areas of the curriculum that are not working as well as it expects. For example, the school has recently adapted its English curriculum to improve the standard of pupils' written work. Teachers have been well supported in the delivery of this new curriculum, as they are when other new initiatives are introduced. The impact of the school's work is already clear. Pupils have greater stamina when writing. This means that they are more successful in producing extended pieces of writing.

Teachers regularly check how well pupils have understood the curriculum. They are quick to address any gaps in knowledge or misconceptions that pupils may have. However, at times, teachers do not ensure that pupils regularly practise what they already know. This includes applying their knowledge of spelling rules, letter formation or punctuation consistently in their written work. Some pupils do not become fluent writers as quickly as they could. This impacts on how well they express their ideas in writing across the curriculum.

Pupils achieve particularly well in reading. They read widely and often. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning across the curriculum.

Children benefit from the clear and accurate modelling of language that adults in the early years provide. Children respond with enthusiasm to the songs, stories and rhymes that their teachers share with them. Through these activities, children develop their understanding of different sounds and patterns in words. This provides a firm foundation for learning how to use phonics to read words in the Reception Year. As a result of the carefully targeted support from well-trained staff, most pupils can read with accuracy and fluency by the time they reach Year 2. Pupils who find reading more challenging continue to access additional support for as long as they need it.

Staff at the school are well trained in identifying and meeting pupils' additional needs, including SEND. These pupils achieve well as a result of well-thought-out support. For example, some pupils with SEND are able to extend their focus during lessons due to effective prompts provided by their teacher.

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality. It provides carefully targeted support for pupils who struggle to attend school regularly and on time. Rates of attendance and punctuality have improved for these pupils in recent years. This enables them to take full advantage of all that the school has to offer.

The school prioritises pupils' wider development. It focuses on ensuring that pupils are well prepared for living in a modern and diverse Britain. Pupils embrace their learning in this area. They develop their ability to recognise how people's differences contribute to an enriched society. Pupils are keen to learn about the faiths and cultures of those who may be different to their own. They recognise that being able to listen to different points of view, as well as expressing their own, could help them develop a wider circle of friends when they are older.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, the school does not ensure that pupils practise and apply what they have learned in English as well as they could. This means that some pupils do not build up the fluency that they need to produce high-quality written work. The school should make sure that pupils' written work across the curriculum is at a consistently high standard and reflects what they have learned.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 school to be good for overall effectiveness in April 2019.

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 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	119516
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10348183
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Reverend Gerard Barry
Headteacher	Heather McGowan
Website	www.stantonysrc.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 April 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Salford. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in November 2024.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 and other leaders in the school.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.

- The inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. She also listened to pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- 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.
- The inspector visited the school's breakfast club.
- The inspector spoke with parents and carers as they dropped their children off at school. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted Parent View to analyse. However, the inspector considered parents' free-text responses.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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