

Inspection of St Bede's Catholic High School

St Anne's Road, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 4TA

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| Inspection dates: | 12 and 13 November 2024 |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Requires improvement |

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend a school where each member of the community is highly valued. They feel safe to be themselves. Pupils appreciate each person's uniqueness. High-quality and personalised pastoral support helps to nurture pupils' well-being. For example, the school runs programmes that help a small number of pupils to express their feelings appropriately.

Pupils behave extremely well. They are courteous, polite and conduct themselves sensibly. Pupils hold doors open for each other and make visitors feel welcomed. They are engaged in their learning and show respect to staff. The school has high expectations of pupils' academic achievement. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well across the curriculum.

The school ensures that pupils are actively involved in school life. For instance, Year 10 reading leaders are trained to support younger pupils with their reading confidence. Many pupils participate keenly in sports and join clubs such as role-playing, gardening and chamber choir. Pupils aspire to wear 'Bede's badge' in recognition of excellence.

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

The school has designed a broad and well-organised curriculum. Most pupils, and especially pupils with SEND, achieve well. Almost all pupils move into sustained education, employment or training when they leave the school. The number of pupils choosing the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects is increasing.

The school has equipped teachers with the expertise that they need to check pupils' understanding. To this end, teachers implement the school's assessment strategy successfully. They are quick to address pupils' misconceptions. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong, including for a small number of teachers who teach outside of their specialisms. Most teachers explain new ideas clearly to help pupils to understand them. The school has strong processes in place to identify pupils' additional needs. Pupils with SEND are supported well across the curriculum. Teachers successfully adapt learning to meet these pupils' needs. That said, in a small number of subjects, some teachers do not choose the most effective teaching strategies. This means that sometimes they move on without ensuring that pupils have had sufficient time to practise and apply new knowledge. When this happens, pupils are hindered from learning as well as they should.

The school has prioritised reading. For instance, it has put in place a programme of support for struggling readers. However, some of the school's work is at an early stage of its development. The additional support that some pupils receive helps them to improve their reading fluency. Nevertheless, it is not helping them catch up with their peers quickly enough.

Teachers employ clear routines in lessons, and pupils respond well to these. There is rarely any low-level disruption. The school's curriculum around character development

principles teaches pupils how to be resilient and to persevere. The majority of pupils are engaged effectively in their learning.

The school has an ambitious personal development programme. There is an ongoing programme of training to ensure that teachers of personal, social and health education are well supported to deliver the curriculum effectively. The school maps out the experiences that are on offer for pupils to ensure that this covers a broad and cohesive range of opportunities. For example, some pupils enjoyed a mock Conference of the Parties around climate change. Other pupils take part in local community projects. Careers guidance helps pupils to make appropriate choices about their next steps after school. Overall, pupils' wider development is well considered, and pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

Governors know the school well and fulfil their statutory duties. They challenge the school effectively and hold it to account. At times, the school's processes for quality assuring its work do not precisely evaluate impact. This hampers the pace of improvement in some areas.

The school has ensured that it listens to staff. For instance, it made changes to the assessment calendar in response to staff feedback. This has helped to ease staff's workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of teachers do not have the expertise to choose the most effective teaching strategies to give pupils the opportunity to practise and apply what they know. This means that some pupils struggle to build a secure body of knowledge over time. The school should ensure that teachers have the pedagogical skills and knowledge to deliver the curriculum as leaders intend.
- At times, the school does not measure the impact of its actions. In addition, some leaders lack the expertise to be able to evaluate their areas accurately. As a result, on occasion, the school does not identify the most effective strategies to bring about improvement. The school should ensure that all leaders have the skills and knowledge to accurately evaluate impact.

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

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| Unique reference number | 119792 |
| Local authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 10348212 |
| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 707 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | John Riley |
| Headteacher | Daniel Morgan |
| Website | www.sbchs.co.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 15 and 16 June 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there is a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior assistant headteacher. There has also been a change in governance with a new chair and vice-chair of governors.
- The school is a Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection took place in February 2024, and the next inspection is due to take place between September 2028 and August 2029.
- The school makes use of two unregistered alternative provisions for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership

and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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, senior leaders and other members of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke to representatives of the local authority, the archdiocese and the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography and art. 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 discussed the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including governor meeting minutes, the school's self-evaluation, development plan and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- 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 considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

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