

Inspection of Hoddlesden St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Bayne Street, Hoddlesden, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 3NH

Inspection dates:	10 and 11 December 2024
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 for overall effectiveness 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 January 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love their school. They actively contribute to making it a happy, positive place. Pupils diligently carry out leadership roles, take responsibility for themselves and demonstrate high levels of respect and support for each other. Their behaviour is impeccable. Pupils consistently live out the school's values. They maturely reflect on their behaviours and strive to become a 'Hoddlesden hero'.

The school is unwavering in its determination for all pupils to reach exceptional heights, in school and beyond. It has designed a broad and innovative curriculum with this vision at its heart. This enables pupils to achieve exceptionally well across a broad range of subjects.

The school continually looks outward when enriching the curriculum. For example, pupils used virtual reality headsets to learn about design processes when they visited a building site. They meet professionals to discuss the skills and knowledge needed for their jobs, including digital illustrators, fashion designers and engineers. Pupils' knowledge develops deeply across a range of subjects.

Pupils' talents and interests are promoted exceptionally well. The extensive range of extra-curricular activities includes art, science, computing, gardening, crochet, choir and many sports. A high proportion of pupils attend clubs and represent the school at events. Pupils learn to play a range of instruments and experience performing with others in a band.

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

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is exemplary. The school identifies and ensures that staff have an in-depth knowledge of pupils' needs. It has rigorous systems to monitor the impact of support for pupils, so that this remains as effective as possible for all. Pupils with SEND achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils enjoy a rich and aspirational curriculum that goes beyond the scope of the national curriculum. For example, they study French from the early years and gain impressive levels of fluency by Year 6. The school has meticulously identified and ordered the key knowledge that pupils should learn in each subject. It has designed the curriculum to enable meaningful connections to be made across subjects. Pupils explained how they designed and created products using 3D printing. They described how they had used their written and spoken skills to present their designs to businesses. Pupils spoke about the mathematical knowledge that they used to calculate profit when marketing the products.

Staff have very strong subject knowledge and deliver the curriculum with consistency, clarity and precision. They are vigilant in identifying pupils' misconceptions and successfully address them in lessons. Published outcomes are consistently above national averages. Pupils make significant progress across the curriculum. This includes those pupils who only attend the school for a short time before accessing national tests.

Reading is prioritised. The school has refined its phonics programme to ensure that activities are highly effective in supporting pupils to learn the intended knowledge. Staff meticulously check pupils' progress through the programme. They provide timely, tailored support, which has a very positive impact on the progress of pupils who struggle to read. Children in early years become immersed in books as staff read aloud. Pupils spoke maturely about the impact that books have had on them. Pupils achieve highly in reading.

Pupils' conduct around the school and in lessons is consistently calm and respectful. They understand the school's expectations and the reasons for the school rules. Pupils work incredibly hard and show high levels of resilience. Children in early years excitedly run to activities, eager to engage in as many learning experiences as possible. Pupils' attendance is strong and has been sustained over time. The school supports families and successfully breaks down any barriers that stop pupils from attending school regularly.

The school's ambition for pupils extends far beyond the classroom. Pupils go on an impressive range of visits, including science and history trips and residential stays. The school broadens pupils' experiences of diversity. They learn how to play wheelchair basketball, meet leaders of different faiths and build friendships with pupils from schools with a different demographic. Pupils are proud of the impact that they have on the wider world. They lead community events, perform with the choir at the hospital and enjoy socialising with older generations at events. As members of the school's 'values committee', pupils plan ways to raise money for many charities. The school ensures that pupils understand the impact this makes to the lives of others.

The school goes above and beyond to support staff to build on their already strong practice, while also considering their well-being and workload. Staff rapidly gain high levels of skills in the subjects that they teach and lead. This expertise is recognised externally, as the school provides support to other schools. Governors carry out their roles effectively. They constantly strive to build on the school's existing strengths.

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	119455
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10314010
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	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Victoria Walmsley
Headteacher	Christopher Dugdale
Website	www.stpaulshoddlesden.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 January 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England primary school and is part of the Diocese of Blackburn. Its last inspection, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, was in June 2018. The school's next section 48 inspection will take place before June 2026.
- The school has experienced considerable changes to leadership and staffing since the previous inspection. This includes the appointment of the current headteacher.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.
- The school operates before- and after-school clubs.

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.
- 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 the headteacher, other leaders, governors and staff at the school. The lead inspector spoke with representatives from the local authority and from the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. 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 some other subjects.
- 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.
- The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils at breaktime, lunchtime and when moving around the school.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors spoke to pupils and to staff to gather their views. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including those related to the governance of the school.

Inspection team

Liz Dayton, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Edmondson

Ofsted Inspector

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