

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Claughton-on-Brock

Smithy Lane, Claughton-on-Brock, Preston, Lancashire PR3 0PN

Inspection dates:	7 and 8 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
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 November 2012. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this small school, which has a big heart. Kind and caring staff greet them warmly as they arrive at school each morning. Pupils are happy. They enjoy coming to school. They delight in everything that the school has to offer.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They understand the school rules and relish the praise and rewards that they receive for working hard and trying their best. Pupils are polite and kind. The school is a calm and harmonious place in which to learn and play.

The school has high expectations for pupils' learning. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils typically achieve well. Children in the early years are well prepared for key stage 1, while pupils in Year 6 are ready for the challenges of the key stage 3 curriculum.

Pupils excel in their various roles and responsibilities. These include acting as school councillors, sports prefects and lunchtime club leaders. Pupils are eager to support their local and wider communities. They learn that they can make a positive difference by raising money for charities and performing in the school's brass band. No matter what the responsibility, pupils make a tangible contribution to all aspects of school life.

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

The school has designed a well-organised curriculum that enables children in the early years and pupils in key stages 1 and 2 to build up their knowledge logically and securely in most subjects. However, in a small number of subjects, including some areas of learning in the early years, the school is still refining its work to ensure that teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn. This means that, sometimes, teachers find it difficult to design learning that helps pupils to gain important knowledge. On occasion, this hampers the depth of subject knowledge that some pupils acquire.

Staff have benefited from curriculum training in recent times. In the main, they choose appropriate resources, activities and questions to help pupils to learn. Staff generally explain new concepts with clarity and use a range of strategies to check on pupils' understanding.

The school has established systems for checking and evaluating the delivery of the curriculum. However, in a small number of subjects, the school does not use these systems as effectively as it could. Consequently, the school sometimes does not identify, or address, the most important issues with how some curriculum content is delivered. On occasion, the curriculum is not delivered as intended, and pupils' learning is hindered.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND quickly. Staff receive effective guidance to equip them with the knowledge to best support these pupils. They adapt the delivery of the curriculum well. As a result, pupils with SEND usually achieve well across the full curriculum.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Pupils benefit from reading a wide range of interesting books. Most pupils develop into fluent, accurate readers. Staff act swiftly to help any pupils who find reading difficult. This helps these pupils to keep up with the phonics programme.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are overwhelmingly positive. Children in the early years develop strong learning behaviours. Pupils across the school build on this positive start. Pupils behave exceptionally well. This means that they can learn without any disruptions.

The school ensures that attendance is of paramount importance. It is proactive in quickly picking up on any rare instances where attendance is not as high as the school expects. This results in high rates of attendance across the school.

The school provides an exemplary range of opportunities to enhance pupils' personal development. Pupils, including pupils with SEND, have a broad and rich experience. They learn about diversity among people and families. Pupils understand the concepts of democracy, respect and tolerance. They understand that rules are there to keep them safe. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives.

Governors use their expertise to provide the school with effective support and challenge. They are committed to the success of every pupil and check on the school's work to achieve this ambition. Staff speak very positively about the school. They praise the support that they receive to reduce their workload so that they can be more focused on pupils' learning. They are proud to be part of the school community.

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 small number of subjects, including in the early years, the school has not given sufficient thought to the essential knowledge that pupils must learn and in what order this should be taught. Some pupils do not achieve as well as they could in these subjects. The school should refine its curriculum thinking in these subjects so that teachers are clear about what pupils should know and remember.
- In a small number of subjects, the school is not effective at evaluating the delivery and impact of the curriculum. This means that some weaknesses are not identified and acted on in a timely manner. In turn, this hinders pupils' achievement in these subjects. The school should ensure that it gathers and evaluates monitoring information effectively so that it can quickly address any shortcomings in subject curriculums.

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	119619
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10314019
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	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jenny Fitzherbert-Brockholes
Headteacher	Sarah Deakin (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.claughtonprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 November 2012, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has collaborated with another local primary school. An executive headteacher is responsible for both schools.
- Several members of staff and many of the governors are new to the school since the previous inspection.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- This Roman Catholic school is within the Diocese of Lancaster. The most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in October 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due by October 2027.

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 executive headteacher and other leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum in some other subjects. They spoke with leaders and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also spoke with some parents and carers during the inspection.
- The inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Victoria Burnside, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Edmondson

Ofsted Inspector

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