

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Darwen

Limes Avenue, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 2SG

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 January 2025

Outcome

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Darwen has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils appreciate all the qualities of St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School. They feel happy and safe. Staff take time to get to know pupils and their families well. They genuinely care about pupils and their well-being. Pupils know they can talk to adults about any worries or concerns that they may have.

The school has high aspirations for all pupils to achieve well. From their varied starting points, most pupils realise these. Effective improvements to the curriculum are having a positive impact.

Pupils behave well. They are highly respectful to staff, visitors and each other. Pupils learn how to build strong relationships with others. They show kindness towards their peers and staff. They are considerate of others' needs. In the early years, children share and take turns well.

Pupils enjoy a range of clubs, such as choir and dodgeball, in which they further develop their interests. Pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities in school. This includes roles such as chaplains, school council representatives and acting as buddies to younger pupils. These support pupils' understanding of responsibility and pride in contributing to the school community.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has overhauled its curriculum. It has set out clearly the knowledge pupils need to learn and the order in which this knowledge should be

taught. The school has led these changes with determination and drive. However, some of the 2024 Year 6 published results from national assessments do not reflect these improvements to the curriculum or how well current pupils are learning.

The school's curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. The work given to pupils helps them to know and remember more over time. Pupils enjoy talking about what they have learned and feel proud of their work. Teachers deliver the curriculum well. They explain new ideas clearly and link them to things pupils already know. This helps pupils to learn well over time. However, sometimes the checks teachers make on pupils' learning do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge or enable pupils to learn more if they are ready to do so. This means that, on occasion, misconceptions persist.

There is a rigorous early reading curriculum that is taught well. Children learn phonics as soon as they start in the Reception class. The books pupils read accurately match the sounds they are learning. Pupils who fall behind with their phonics knowledge receive effective support to catch up quickly. As a result, children learn to read well.

In the early years, children have an array of opportunities to explore and learn both indoors and out. New lessons often fill them with excitement and curiosity. For example, children recently learned about animals that live in cold conditions and linked this to the snowy weather they had seen here. Children in the early years respond positively to the calm, nurturing approach of adults.

The school has recently renewed its behaviour systems. It has supported staff to ensure they have a shared understanding of these. Consequently, staff treat pupils fairly. Pupils know the behaviour expected of them. They behave and conduct themselves well. Pupils are polite and learn the school routines from an early age. The school tracks pupils' attendance with rigour. If attendance falls, it works closely with parents and carers to bring about necessary improvements. Most pupils attend school regularly because of this.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive excellent support. The school quickly identifies pupils who need extra help. Staff understand these pupils' needs and provide tailored support, both in lessons and through extra activities.

The school's work to enhance pupils' character and wider development is strong. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities that extend their learning beyond the classroom. These activities include leadership roles, trips, residential visits and after-school clubs. Pupils also learn important life lessons on topics such as healthy relationships, respect, diversity and online safety. Consequently, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for later life.

Senior leaders are highly committed to their school and demonstrate a strong passion for its success. The school fosters an effective partnership with parents, resulting in parents feeling positive about and supportive of the school's efforts.

The school and its governing body collaborate effectively, sharing a clear and united vision. They are focused on pursuing continuous improvement. Communication among staff is frequent and considered. This ensures that everyone understands the school's

actions and objectives. The school prioritises staff well-being, taking steps to support workload management. Staff greatly value these efforts and feel proud to be part of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not check pupils' learning as effectively as they should. On occasion, this leads to missed opportunities to address misconceptions or extend learning when pupils are ready. The school should ensure teachers are equipped to systematically assess pupils' understanding to help them revisit or advance their learning as needed.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2015.

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	119667
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10348202
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	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alistair Ray
Headteacher	Leanne Brown
Website	www.stjosephsrcp.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school has a Roman Catholic religious character and is part of the Diocese of Salford. Its most recent section 48 inspection was in November 2024. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- 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 met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and a range of staff. The inspector met with members of the governing body.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, she spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the results of the online staff survey.

Inspection team

Rebecca Sharples, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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