

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Thorneyholme Roman Catholic Primary School, Dunsop Bridge

Trough Road, Dunsop Bridge, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 3BG

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 March 2025

Outcome

Thorneyholme Roman Catholic Primary School, Dunsop Bridge 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 this welcoming school community. They appreciate that this makes it easier to build friendships with others. Staff provide for the differing needs of individual pupils with thoughtfulness and care. This is particularly true for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The school has high expectations for pupils' academic achievement. Pupils typically achieve well. They particularly enjoy learning about and exploring the uniqueness of their local rural environment. For example, 'curlew ambassadors' track the migration patterns of these birds that nest near to the school.

Children settle quickly in the early years. They learn how to consider the needs of others and the benefits of working cooperatively. Older pupils build on this firm foundation. They behave well in class and as they move around the school.

Pupils of all ages play together happily at breaktimes. They become engrossed in making homes to provide shelter for minibeasts and other wildlife in their outdoor forest area. Here, pupils successfully apply what they have learned in the classroom to solve problems, such as how to lift and move heavy objects safely. Activities such as these help pupils to develop their well-being, confidence and resilience.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious. It has been refined recently in several subjects, including in English. Leaders have designed the curriculum to be responsive to the cohort needs, taking into account the small size of the school.

Teachers typically deliver the intended curriculum well. Most of the time, they check that pupils have fully understood prior learning before introducing something new. However, the school has made substantial changes to the curriculum without fully considering the impact on teachers' workload. This has led to some inconsistency in how well the curriculum is implemented. This is particularly true in relation to how consistently well teachers consider what pupils of different ages within their class need to know.

Teachers are focused on becoming familiar with their classes' new curriculum. As a result, they sometimes forget to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning or misconceptions. At times, this includes when pupils incorrectly form letters or do not read familiar words with fluency. When this happens, pupils do not build up their knowledge as effectively as they could.

Reading has a high priority at the school. Staff are undergoing training and support to deliver the recently introduced new phonics programme with greater consistency. While this is happening, the rate at which children in the early years build up their ability to apply their phonics knowledge in reading is variable. This is also true for other pupils at the early stages of reading in Years 1 and 2. This impacts on the fluency of some of these pupils' reading at times.

Most older pupils are proficient readers. They access the rest of the curriculum with ease. Pupils read widely. They talk about the different literature and authors that they have studied with enthusiasm. Pupils who found learning to read a challenge in Years 1 and 2, benefit from additional support as they progress through the school.

Pupils demonstrate consistently positive attitudes to their learning. Teachers are skilled in identifying and meeting the differing needs of pupils with SEND. This begins in the early years. Teachers adapt resources or approaches to learning so that children with SEND grow in confidence and independence. These pupils build on this well as they progress through the school.

Pupils benefit from the strong support that the school provides for their personal development. The school strives to develop pupils' understanding of the wider world as well as the established community that it belongs to. Pupils are proud of their achievements in activities within their locality and with other schools. These include attending residential trips, taking part in writing competitions and in mass singing events. Through carefully considered opportunities like these, pupils find out about leisure activities available to them beyond the school gate that could contribute to their physical and mental well-being in later life.

Strong and positive relationships pervade the school. The governing body works closely with staff to ensure that pupils' best interests remain at the heart of any decision-making. Curriculum leadership is still developing. As a result, the school is not consistently able to pinpoint where it most needs to focus its efforts in some areas of the curriculum. This hampers how it identifies its next steps in further improving the quality of education that pupils receive or how well teachers are supported to manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has introduced substantial changes to the curriculum in a number of subjects, including a new phonics and a handwriting programme, which are not fully embedded. At times, this impacts on teachers' abilities to focus on what pupils most need to learn. On occasions, the rate at which pupils learn slows as a result. The school should ensure that it supports teachers to develop their expertise in delivering the refined curriculums and address gaps in pupils' knowledge consistently well.
- The school's systems for evaluating the impact of the curriculum are at the early stages of development. This means that the school is not as clear as it could be about how effectively pupils are learning or how well teachers are managing their workload. The school should provide the support that curriculum leaders need to identify what is working well in their areas of responsibility and what could be strengthened further.

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 May 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	119689
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10348207
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	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Neil Wallace
Headteacher	Claire Halstead
Website	www.thorneyholme.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a religious character. It is part of the Diocese of Salford. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in February 2025.
- There is a new headteacher in post since the time of the last inspection. There have also been other changes to leadership arrangements.
- The current headteacher has responsibility for another school in the local authority.
- A new chair of governors has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- 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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school.
- An inspector met with members of the governing body.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- 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.
- An inspector spoke with parents and carers as they dropped their children off at school.
- Inspectors considered parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View including their free-text responses.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils. However, inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They also spoke with members of staff.
- An inspector visited the school's after-school club.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mike Tonge

Ofsted Inspector

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