

# Inspection of a good school: St Mary's and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn

Bennington Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 3HP

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Inspection dates:

12 and 13 October 2022

## **Outcome**

St Mary's and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are very happy in this school. They arrive each morning excited and ready to learn. Staff have strong relationships with pupils. Pupils feel listened to and safe. They told inspectors that incidents of bullying are rare. Staff deal with such incidents quickly and successfully.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils' behaviour in lessons, and their positive attitudes to learning, reflect the high expectations of leaders. Pupils want to do their best and are committed to their learning. As a result, most pupils achieve well.

Leaders have ensured that all pupils feel valued. Pupils celebrate diversity and are respectful of difference. Pupils warmly welcome others and ensure that everyone is treated equally. Leaders' 'SPIRIT' values of skills for life, participation, innovation, roles and responsibilities, independence and taking risks are brought to life by pupils. Pupils understand these values and follow them with pride.

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

Leaders have constructed a broad and ambitious curriculum. They have thought carefully about how the curriculum is designed to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils. For example, leaders have ensured that pupils have many opportunities to develop language and vocabulary across the curriculum. Leaders have identified the essential knowledge that they want pupils to learn and when this will be taught, from Reception Year to Year 6.

Leaders quickly identify any additional needs that pupils may have. Pupils with SEND are supported well to access the same curriculum as their classmates. For example, pupils

become immersed in sounds, pictures and videos to support their learning when they access the specially designed four-dimensional facilities.

Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They check for any gaps in pupils' knowledge and address misconceptions quickly. Teachers use a consistent approach to revisit previously taught knowledge. This helps pupils, including children in early years, to know and remember more of the curriculum.

Leaders support staff well and ensure that they have the knowledge and expertise to deliver the curriculum effectively. However, in a minority of subjects, teachers are less skilled in using assessment strategies to check that pupils are learning all that they should. At times, this hinders pupils from building secure knowledge over time in these subjects.

Leaders have prioritised reading from early years to Year 6. Pupils talked excitedly about their recent visit to meet an author who read them her own stories. Such events inspire pupils to have a love of reading. The phonics curriculum is taught from the beginning of Reception Year. It is designed to enable pupils to learn and remember the sounds that they need in order to become accurate readers. Pupils read books that match the sounds they are learning in their lessons. This ensures that they can practise what they have been taught. Those pupils who need help to keep up with the phonics curriculum are supported well by staff. As a result, most pupils become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils behave well in their lessons and outside at playtimes. Older pupils, in their role as play leaders, help younger pupils by initiating games and modelling how to play nicely. Pupils are focused on their learning in lessons. They listen to each other and their teachers carefully. This means that incidents of disruption to lessons are rare.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn extensively beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils can attend a wide range of clubs. For example, some pupils attend the dance club and some parents and carers and pupils attended an after-school healthy eating club. Older pupils worked alongside a chef to cook healthy meals. Pupils also appreciate the opportunities to visit places such as an art gallery in Liverpool and a museum in Manchester.

Pupils have roles of responsibility in and out of school. For example, some pupils are members of the school parliament, or are house captains or digital leaders. Pupils support different charities. These range from a local food bank to a global charity. Pupils are involved in a community initiative, the Super Slow Way project. They have grown flax and woad in the school field to help to revive the local textile industry. This experience helps pupils to develop into active and responsible citizens.

The school is well led and managed. Leaders and governors are ambitious for pupils. Governors provide effective challenge and support to leaders. Staff feel extremely well supported by leaders and they are proud to work in this school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. They provide training for staff to safeguard pupils. Staff are alert to any signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Leaders have ensured that there are clear systems in place for staff to report and record any concerns that they may have.

Leaders act quickly to secure help for vulnerable pupils. The nurture team provides timely support in school. Leaders also access other agencies to secure help for vulnerable pupils. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. For example, they learn how to be safe on their bicycles and when they are close to roads.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a minority of subjects, the curriculum is being reviewed. As a result, teachers are less skilled in using assessment strategies to make sure that pupils learn all that they should. At times, this hinders pupils from building knowledge over time in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that teachers make effective use of assessment strategies to ensure that pupils learn all that they should.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 in February 2017.

## **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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119513
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	10226095
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	211
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Michael Ashcroft
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrea Thomson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmaryandstjosephs.co.uk">www.stmaryandstjosephs.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school belongs to the Diocese of Salford. Its most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character was in June 2017.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders in school. She also spoke with a range of staff.
- The inspector met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority, a school improvement adviser and a representative of the diocese.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.

- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also considered the responses from the Ofsted surveys for staff and for pupils.
- The inspector examined a range of safeguarding documentation. She checked how leaders ensure that safer recruitment procedures are in place. The inspector checked records of staff's safeguarding training. She also spoke to staff to check how well they understand safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes, in lessons and around school. She also spoke to pupils about their experiences at school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. She met subject leaders and teachers and visited a sample of lessons. The inspector spoke with pupils. She also looked at examples of pupils' work. The inspector observed pupils reading to trusted adults.

### **Inspection team**

Sally Timmons, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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