

Inspection of St Mary's and St Benedict's Roman Catholic Primary School

Brownedge Lane, Bamber Bridge, Preston, Lancashire PR5 6TA

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils told inspectors that they make lots of friends at school. They said that staff take time to listen to them. Older pupils carry out additional responsibilities with pride, such as being part of the chaplaincy team or eco-club. Pupils learn to celebrate the uniqueness of each individual. They appreciate how important it is to respect each other, regardless of difference.

Leaders' decisive action to improve behaviour means that many pupils behave well. However, there remains a small proportion of pupils who do not follow the school rules as well as they should. Nevertheless, most pupils feel happy and safe at school. Leaders deal with incidents of bullying thoroughly.

Leaders want the best for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, pupils' achievement is not good enough. This is because leaders have not clarified what they want pupils to know. Pupils struggle to remember what they have learned. This makes it harder for them to build on prior learning.

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

Leaders fully understand the requirements of the latest early years statutory guidance and the expectations set out in the national curriculum. They have used this knowledge to ensure that the recently revised curriculums in many subjects are suitably ambitious. However, much of this work is new and in progress. These curriculums do not help teachers to understand the key knowledge that must be taught and when this will happen. As a result, teachers' success in designing learning that helps pupils to build on what they already know is varied. Some pupils struggle to recall what they have learned before because their knowledge is insecure across a range of subjects. They do not achieve as well they should.

Teachers check what pupils have learned. However, the information that these checks provide does not help teachers to spot or overcome gaps in pupils' learning. This is because teachers lack clarity about what pupils should know and understand to make progress through the curriculum.

Leaders have invested time and money to ensure that pupils become fluent and confident readers. They have introduced a new phonics programme and made sure that staff have been suitably trained to deliver the phonics programme in a consistent manner.

Teachers make sure that children in Nursery learn to distinguish sounds. Children enjoy listening to stories and joining in with songs and rhymes. This prepares them well to learn the sounds that letters represent. Children in the Reception Year and pupils in key stage 1 build on this strong start and learn to use their phonics

knowledge to read words. Pupils who find reading more difficult receive effective support to catch up. However, despite having purchased a range of suitable reading materials, leaders are only just beginning to make sure that pupils read from books that match the sounds they know. Until very recently, this has limited their reading fluency.

Weaknesses in the previous reading curriculum mean that some older pupils have not developed a wide enough vocabulary or the stamina to read a more challenging range of texts. Consequently, the attainment of Year 6 pupils in reading, in 2022, was significantly below average.

Leaders provide effective support to help pupils overcome barriers that they face in accessing the curriculum. Teachers have become skilled at identifying pupils with SEND and putting suitable support in place for them. However, the achievement of these pupils is similar to others in the school. They do not build up their knowledge as well as they should.

Most pupils behave well in class and around the school. Some pupils told inspectors about how much their own and other pupils' behaviour has improved. They value the support they receive from staff. However, these improvements are not consistently evident across the whole school. Leaders do not ensure that all pupils are able to focus on learning during lesson time. Some pupils continue to disturb their own and others' learning.

Some pupils, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, are persistently absent from school. This impacts on their learning and means that gaps in their knowledge are widening. Leaders are focused on supporting these pupils to achieve better attendance so that they benefit from all that school has to offer.

Pupils access a wide range of clubs, which helps them to develop confidence and new skills or talents. Many pupils enjoy sports and other activities that contribute to their health and well-being. Leaders ensure that all pupils are supported to develop positive attitudes to themselves and their learning. Pupils learn to be resilient. They develop self-confidence in sharing their ideas and supporting each other.

Governors support the work of leaders. Their support is valued by leaders and staff alike. However, governors have offered insufficient challenge to leaders about the quality of education that pupils receive. While they have an accurate understanding of the school's shortcomings, they have not done enough to tackle these weaknesses in the past.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff know how to keep pupils safe. Staff are alert to the potential risks that might cause pupils to be harmed. Staff fastidiously record and

pass on their concerns to the leaders responsible for safeguarding. Leaders are swift to act when a concern is raised about a pupil. Leaders provide effective support. They make sure that vulnerable pupils benefit from well-thought-out additional help when it is needed

Pupils learn about safe and unsafe relationships. They are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves and others safe, especially while they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The recently revised curriculums do not help teachers to know what should be taught and when this should happen. This hampers teachers from designing learning that helps pupils to gain a secure body of knowledge over time. Leaders should ensure that the key knowledge is clearly identified in subject curriculums so that pupils can build on what they already know.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils regularly read books that support them to develop reading fluency or stamina. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in reading. Leaders should make sure that pupils receive the support they need to become confident and accomplished readers.
- Leaders do not ensure that all staff implement the school's behaviour policy consistently well. Pupils do not learn as well as they could because staff allow small groups of pupils to disturb lessons. Leaders need to ensure that pupils receive the support they need to behave as well as they can.
- Governors have not consistently held leaders to account for key parts of the school's work. As a result, pupils do not benefit from a good quality of education, and they do not achieve as well as they should. Governors should ensure that they increase their oversight of the school's work so that they have a secure and realistic understanding of its effectiveness.

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

Unique reference number	119704
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10242192
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	292
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Susan Haworth
Headteacher	Daniel Ballard
Website	www.smsb.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection. This appointment followed a period of unsettled leadership at the school.
- The school belongs to the Diocese of Salford. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act for schools of a religious character in April 2017.
- Leaders make use of one registered alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school. They spoke with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. They also spoke with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, including the school's central record of staff and visitors, staff training records, records of safeguarding and samples of the records kept on individual pupils.
- An inspector listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography, music and physical education. They spoke with the leaders of these areas of the curriculum. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school. Inspectors scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Barbara Dutton	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Bentham	His Majesty's Inspector

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