

Inspection of Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School, Church

Bradshaw Row, Church, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 4HG

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 February 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Sacred Heart is a happy and caring place where everyone is valued. Relationships among pupils, and between staff and pupils, are warm and positive. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in this school. They know that the adults care about them and will help them if they need any support.

The school has high ambitions for pupils and a clear vision for ensuring that they experience a high-quality education. However, despite the implementation of an ambitious curriculum, some pupils, especially older pupils, do not achieve as well as they should. This is due to their previous gaps in learning.

Pupils rise to meet the high expectations for their behaviour. They move sensibly around school and are polite and respectful to adults and to each other. Their attitudes to learning are positive. Staff provide effective support for pupils who need help to manage their emotions.

Pupils' personal development is fostered well. Pupils learn how to lead healthy and safe lives, and they gain an understanding of the differences between themselves and others. Pupils are taught to be respectful, kind and welcoming. They value the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular clubs and to take on leadership roles that contribute to the smooth running of the school.

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

The school has experienced a considerable period of staffing and leadership instability in recent years. This has had a negative impact on pupils' achievement. The published data shows that the attainment of Year 6 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics has been significantly below the national average for a period of time.

New leadership of the school has brought about considerable change in a relatively short period of time. The curriculum has been overhauled, pupils' behaviour has improved and subject leadership has strengthened. This means that most pupils at the school are experiencing a stronger quality of education than they did in the past. Even so, these changes are having less impact on older pupils. This is because they have the biggest gaps in their learning, especially in writing, due to the considerable changes in staffing and the weaknesses in the previous curriculum. This prevents these pupils from achieving as well as they should.

The school has designed a curriculum that sets out the important knowledge that pupils will learn. This gives teachers clear guidance about what they should teach and when this should happen. The school has ensured that staff are suitably supported to build their subject knowledge so that they are better equipped to deliver the curriculum.

Typically, teachers design appropriate and engaging activities that enable pupils to learn the curriculum well. However, on occasion, teachers do not select the most appropriate

activities to support pupils' learning. When this happens, some pupils do not learn the key curriculum knowledge as well as they should.

Staff check on what pupils know and remember regularly. They mostly spot pupils' misconceptions and address these quickly. However, they are less effective in identifying and remedying the gaps that exist in older pupils' knowledge and understanding.

The school is ambitious for pupils to develop a love of reading. The phonics programme enables children in the Reception class, and pupils in key stage 1, to develop their knowledge of letters and sounds effectively. The school has invested in a wide range of resources to deliver the phonics programme and to promote a love of reading. Pupils who are struggling to keep up with the phonics programme benefit from suitable support that helps them to catch up quickly. Most pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to read with confidence and fluency.

Since the previous inspection, the school has enhanced its provision to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff receive the information that they need about pupils with SEND. They use this information to give these pupils the help that they need. The school ensures that pupils with SEND participate fully in the same curriculum and wider opportunities as their peers.

Children in the early years benefit from a carefully designed curriculum. Learning activities support children in developing their knowledge, communication and language skills. They enjoy the wide range of opportunities to develop their physical and social skills. Staff care for the children well and help them to become independent. This means that children are well prepared for their move into key stage 1.

The consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour, along with staff's raised expectations, mean that most pupils are attentive during lessons and show engagement in their learning. The school's actions to address poor attendance rates and punctuality are bearing fruit. This has led to more pupils attending school regularly and on time.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that support their personal development. They know how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils undertake a range of responsibilities diligently, for example as school councillors, digital leaders and play leaders. This prepares them to become active citizens.

There have been considerable changes to the governing body in the recent past. This has left a number of vacancies which has meant a lot of responsibility has rested with a small number of governors. New governors have recently been appointed to reverse this situation. Staff appreciate the consideration that the school has for their well-being. For example, they are given the time and resources that they need to carry out their duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not match learning activities sufficiently to the knowledge that the school has identified for pupils to learn. This means that, at times, some pupils do not learn key curriculum knowledge as well as they should. The school should ensure that teachers design learning activities that help pupils to learn the curriculum consistently well.
- Some older pupils have gaps in their learning, especially in writing, due to weaknesses in the previous curriculum and the negative impact of instability in staffing. This prevents them from benefiting fully from the new and improved curriculums. The school should ensure that it addresses the gaps in pupils' knowledge so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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	119658
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10377977
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	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jayne O'Boyle
Headteacher	Carolyn Mashiter
Website	www.sacredheartschoolchurch.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 April 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Roman Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in March 2023.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. 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 a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and reviewed pupils' work in some other subjects.
- 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.
- The inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and representatives of the diocese and the local authority.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They considered responses from staff and pupils to Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views of behaviour and bullying. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Cleo Cunningham, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kevin Simpson

Ofsted Inspector

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