

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

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

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|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Inspection dates:         | 14 and 15 January 2025      |
| The quality of education  | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| Behaviour and attitudes   | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Personal development      | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Leadership and management | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Early years provision     | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Previous inspection grade | Requires improvement        |

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

Pupils enjoy coming to this happy school. Children in early years, and pupils across other classes who join mid-year, settle into school life quickly. Staff forge strong relationships with pupils and their families. Pupils trust these adults to help if they have any worries or concerns. This helps make pupils feel safe.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They listen attentively to their teachers.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, are starting to benefit from the school's raised expectations of what they can achieve. Pupils now learn a more ambitious curriculum. However, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge across some subjects. This means that these pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities beyond the academic curriculum that help pupils to develop their interests and talents. Pupils are proud of the leadership responsibilities that they have within school, for example, as school councillors, eco councillors or members of the chaplaincy team.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has taken swift action to improve its provision for pupils. This has made a positive difference to pupils' behaviour and attendance. Moreover, the school has refined its curriculum thinking in most subjects. This means that teachers are clear about the most important knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which this should be taught. However, in a few subjects, this work is not complete. In these subjects, the activities that teachers design do not help pupils build a rich body of knowledge.

In most subjects, improvements to the curriculum are beginning to benefit pupils. However, historical weaknesses in the previous curriculum mean that pupils, including those with SEND, have gaps and misconceptions in their knowledge. In some subjects, the school has not ensured that teachers identify and address these gaps. This means that pupils are sometimes moved on to new learning before they are ready. This hinders how well pupils achieve.

The school identifies pupils' additional needs accurately and provides effective support for pupils with SEND. It makes sure that teachers adapt their teaching of the curriculum so that these pupils can learn alongside their peers. Nevertheless, where the curriculum is less well developed, this has a negative impact on the achievement of pupils with SEND.

The school places a high priority on reading. Children in early years get off to a strong start in learning to read. However, some pupils in Years 1 and 2, and some older pupils, struggle to read fluently. Also, when pupils fall behind the pace of the phonics

programme, the support that they receive is not precise enough to address the gaps in their knowledge. This hinders how well these pupils learn the curriculum.

In the early years, staff support children to build positive relationships. Children learn and play well together. They enjoy listening to and joining in with stories, rhymes and songs. This helps them to learn and practise using new words. Children develop their mathematical understanding well. Children gain the knowledge that they need to be well prepared for Year 1 and beyond.

Pupils are polite, friendly and caring towards each other. They behave well around school. Pupils who sometimes struggle to manage their emotions benefit from sensitive support from staff who know them well. This support helps these pupils to learn to manage their emotions. The school places great importance on regular attendance. This has made a positive difference. Most pupils attend school regularly. The school identifies and then provides effective support to those pupils and their families who struggle to be in school on time every day.

The provision for pupils' personal development is well considered. Pupils talk with maturity about issues such as healthy relationships and staying safe online. Pupils respect those who are different to themselves. They understand the importance of fundamental British values. Pupils benefit from the wealth of trips and visitors. For instance, learning about democracy through a talk from the local MP.

Since the previous inspection, governors have ensured that they have an appropriate range of experience and expertise to provide effective challenge and support. They check that the school is focused on the right things to improve the quality of education for pupils. Governors and school leaders are mindful of the workload and well-being of staff when making decisions. Staff are proud to work at this school. They are committed to the community that they serve.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Staff do not check pupils' learning well enough to identify where there are gaps in their knowledge. This means that these gaps go unaddressed, and some pupils are moved on to new concepts before they are ready. The school should ensure that it identifies and addresses gaps in pupils' knowledge with greater effectiveness.
- In some subjects, the school has not given sufficient thought to the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. This hinders pupils in building a secure body of knowledge in these subject areas. The school should ensure that it identifies clearly what pupils should learn and when this should happen.

- Some pupils do not receive the support that they need to become confident and fluent readers. When this happens, these pupils struggle to learn the curriculum. The school should ensure that these pupils have the support that they need to catch up quickly and learn to read well.

## 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

|                                            |                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 119704                                                            |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Lancashire                                                        |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10377979                                                          |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                                                           |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided                                                   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11                                                           |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                                             |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 266                                                               |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                                                |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Richard Hodgson                                                   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Daniel Ballard                                                    |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.smsb.lancs.sch.uk">www.smsb.lancs.sch.uk</a>  |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | 17 and 18 January 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

## Information about this school

- This is a Catholic school in the Diocese of Salford. It was previously inspected under section 48 of the Education Act for schools of a religious character in November 2024. The next 48 inspection is likely to take place in five years.
- The school does not use any 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 conducted deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, history and art and design. For each deep dive, they had discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with subject leaders and with pupils about their learning in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also met with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors talked with staff and leaders about their workload and well-being.
- 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.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school. They looked at a range of documents related to pupils' welfare and education. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school.
- An inspector visited the school's breakfast club.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents and carers at the start of the school day. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

## Inspection team

|                              |                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Mark Hazzard, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Amy Burkes                   | Ofsted Inspector |
| Katie Hague                  | Ofsted Inspector |

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