

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School, Feniscowles, Blackburn

Preston Old Road, Feniscowles, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 5EP

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 February 2025

Outcome

St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School, Feniscowles, Blackburn has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe in this school's welcoming environment. Adults and pupils talk often about the family feel at St Paul's. Pupils can speak to trusted adults about any worries they have. They know the school's aspiration 'to love, grow, learn and achieve beyond our dreams'. This inspires them to do their best.

The school has high expectations for all pupils. Pupils develop rich vocabulary and confidence, for example, to solve mathematical problems. They enjoy rising to the challenges staff set for them every day. Consequently, pupils achieve well at every stage.

Starting in the Reception class, children settle into helpful routines. Older pupils build on this and manage their own behaviour well. They listen attentively to adults and each other. Pupils share and take turns together. They show good manners when moving around school. Pupils take time to open doors and greet visitors.

The school offers extensive opportunities beyond the classroom. There is a selection of sporting and creative clubs, which they can join to develop their talents. Pupils take their leadership roles very seriously. They diligently take care of the chickens and the school dog, Pip. Pupils act with initiative as gardeners, active-play leaders and librarians. This helps them develop confidence and support younger children. Many pupils develop new skills and interests.

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

Decisive action has been taken to revise the curriculum in recent years. The school has thought carefully about the knowledge it wants pupils to learn. The curriculum intends that all pupils are challenged and can succeed. Staff have benefited from training in recent years. They know that new knowledge must connect to previous learning. The curriculum is rich and engaging. Starting in Reception, the school has high expectations of pupils. Over time, pupils know more and remember more. For instance, in mathematics, pupils become fluent with times tables work.

On most occasions, the school has secure systems to pinpoint any gaps in pupils' learning and revisits new topics when needed. Staff intervene to ensure that pupils can keep up. Pupils' work enables them to demonstrate their learning. They gain new knowledge in each subject, which helps to ensure that they are ready for secondary school.

Typically, the school delivers the curriculum well. Most activities match what it wants pupils to learn. Occasionally, this does not happen and staff do not design activities which help pupils to gain new learning. When this happens, pupils do not make as much progress through the curriculum as they could.

Staff support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. The school enlists the help of specialist agencies, when needed. Pupils with SEND have their needs identified swiftly. The school provides well-tailored support. For example, pupils are supported with motor skills so that they can write more easily. These pupils are well cared for and make strong progress through the curriculum.

Children learn to read as soon as they arrive at school. Staff deliver the phonics programme well. They spot any pupils who are struggling and give them additional support. Nearly all pupils leave key stage one as fluent readers. The school seamlessly builds on this success. Staff ensure that older pupils develop a love of reading. They enjoy choosing books from the school library. Pupils appreciate the help teachers give them when they come across new words. This helps them to build up their vocabulary.

Pupils' behaviour across school is kind and courteous. They have considerate friendships and are respectful towards staff. They display positive attitudes to learning. There are no interruptions to lessons and pupils work hard. This starts in the early years. Staff have high expectations of children's ability to sustain attention. For instance, children listened considerately to adults showing photographs from the past. Then they confidently worked in pairs to describe past and present clothing, while having fun dressing up.

The school identifies families who need support, to enable pupils to attend school regularly. It has established positive and effective relationships with parents and carers. Most pupils, therefore, attend regularly and on time.

Pupils are prepared well for life beyond school. The school provides a rich menu of wider opportunities. These help to prepare pupils to become responsible citizens. They vote for school councillors and lead worship activities. There is a plethora of clubs which pupils can

join, such as digital leaders, darts and dancing. Pupils know how to stay physically and mentally healthy. They respect all groups of people equally.

Leaders at all levels are effective in driving forward further developments at the school. Staff feel very well supported with their workload and well-being. They are consulted on any changes which take place. Leaders at all levels make decisions which are in the best interests of pupils. Governors are well informed. They support and challenge the school productively.

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 lessons, the tasks set by teachers do not help pupils to focus on the important knowledge that they should learn and remember. This slows their progress through the curriculum. The school should ensure that lessons support the aims of the curriculum well and help pupils to reach the ambitious goals that the school has for them.

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 January 2020.

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	119649
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10366741
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andi Willacy
Headteacher	Gary Foster
Website	www.stpaulsfeniscowles.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary-aided Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection was in December 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due in the 2027/2028 academic year.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.
- The school runs a before-school club.
- Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors has been appointed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point in time evaluation about the quality of a school's educational provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders. She also spoke with a representative of the diocese, the school's improvement partner and the local authority. The inspector also met members of the governing body.
- The inspector considered the responses from parents and carers, both in person and through Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. She also met with groups of staff and pupils.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including records of behaviour, case studies and attendance records. The inspector also examined the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan documents.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils and staff, reviewed pupils' work and listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector spoke to pupils at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspector spoke to the early career teacher and mentor.

Inspection team

Trish Merritt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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