

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Brendan's RC Primary School, Harwood, Bolton

Brookfold Lane, Harwood, Bolton, Lancashire BL2 4DZ

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 December 2024

Outcome

St Brendan's RC Primary School, Harwood, Bolton has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very proud to attend this happy and welcoming school. Pupils relish the rich opportunities that the school provides to broaden their horizons and learn about the wider world. Most pupils thrive due to the strong relationships that exist with staff. Pupils spoke very fondly about Maple, the school's therapy dog. Pupils know that Maple, the staff and the 'well-being ambassadors' help them to feel better if they are sad or upset.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make an exceptional contribution to school life. They carry out their many leadership responsibilities, for example as planet protectors and digital leaders, with great diligence and pride. Pupils regularly carry out work to support others. For instance, pupils organise many fundraising initiatives to raise money for various charities and other worthy causes.

Pupils proudly rise to meet the school's very high expectations for their behaviour. Pupils' conduct embodies the school's motto, 'Love Life, Love Learning. Achieve Together in God's Love'.

The school has designed a varied and engaging curriculum which interests and inspires pupils to do their best. Most pupils, including those with SEND, live up to the school's high expectations for their learning. They mostly achieve well in a range of subjects.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop its curriculum. Staff receive regular training so that they have secure subject knowledge in most areas of the curriculum. They typically deliver subject curriculums as the school intends.

Staff use assessment information well in most subjects to shape future teaching and to address misconceptions, particularly in English and mathematics. This helps pupils to be well prepared for the next stage of their education.

In a few subjects, however, the most important concepts and knowledge that pupils should learn have not been sufficiently emphasised or revisited. In addition, the checks that staff make on pupils' learning do not always ensure that pupils are successfully building on earlier content. This hampers some pupils from developing a strong body of knowledge over time in these subjects.

Reading has a high priority across the school. This starts in the Reception class where cosy reading areas inspire children to develop a love of books and reading. Pupils benefit from a very well-thought-out phonics programme, which is delivered expertly by well-trained staff. Pupils, including any who may struggle with reading, make strong progress through the phonics programme. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to embed the changes that it has made to improve its key stage 2 reading programme. Most pupils read with increasing stamina and fluency.

The school accurately identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Typically, the school makes suitable adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum so that most pupils can learn the same content as other pupils. However, on occasion, some of the support for pupils with SEND is not as effective or timely as it could be.

Pupils work and play harmoniously together. They enjoy the many rewards that they can earn for their good work and behaviour, such as the 'golden leaf' award. Pupils' positive attitudes to school are reflected in their high rates of attendance.

Pupils discover and nurture their talents and interests through a very well-considered programme of extra-curricular activities. Pupils show a deep awareness and respect for people of other faiths, cultures and backgrounds from their own. Pupils discuss maturely the current affairs and issues that are important to them. This is testament to the school's successful work in developing pupils' understanding of values such as tolerance and respect.

Pupils appreciate the importance of looking after their emotional health and well-being. Pupils enjoy participating in yoga and they also look forward to their daily mindfulness sessions.

Governors share the school's high ambition for pupils. They know the school well. Staff are very proud to work at the school. They feel listened to when the school makes

changes to its policies and practice. This supports staff's well-being and workload. The majority of parents and carers who shared their views with the inspector have a positive view about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the key concepts that pupils should revisit over time have not been identified or emphasised well enough. In addition, the checks that staff make on pupils' knowledge do not always ensure that pupils are effectively building on earlier learning. This hinders some pupils in developing detailed knowledge in these subjects. The school should ensure that further refinements to these subject curriculums support pupils to deepen their learning in the longer term.
- Support for pupils with SEND is not always as effective or as timely as it could be. This means that, on occasions, pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that its systems for supporting pupils with SEND are consistently effective so that these pupils progress well through the curriculum.

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 first 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	105246
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10347944
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Liam Hosie
Headteacher	Fiona Brindley
Website	www.st-brendan.bolton.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- ☐ The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.
- ☐ St Brendan's is a Roman Catholic school in the Diocese of Salford. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2018. The school's next section 48 inspection is overdue.

Information about this inspection

- ☐ Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education 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.
- ☐ The inspector spoke to the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority, a representative of the diocese and the school's improvement partner.

- ☐ The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- ☐ The inspector spoke to parents and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector spoke to pupils and to staff to gather their views. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils.
- ☐ The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including those related to the governance 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 discussed the school's approach to behaviour and attendance. She spoke with pupils about behaviour and observed pupils at lunchtime and when moving around the school.

Inspection team

Louise McArdle, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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