

Inspection of St Charles' RC School

Knowles Street, Rishton, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 4HT

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 March 2025

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils bask in the warm relationships that lie at the heart of this school. They feel valued through the compassion and consideration that staff show them. A nurturing and caring atmosphere permeates the school. Pupils are assured that they will be supported well if they have any concerns.

Pupils are charismatic and confident citizens. They state happily that this is a school where everyone is welcome. Pupils work and play cooperatively with each other, including children in the early years. They are friendly and welcoming to visitors. Pupils benefit from attending school regularly. This has a positive impact on their learning and friendships.

The school wants the best for its pupils, both academically and in their wider lives. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It has high aspirations for pupils' achievement. Many pupils meet these high standards.

Pupils are very proud of their school. They sing joyfully and wholeheartedly in their assemblies and enjoy the celebration. Pupils are enthusiastic, particularly in relation to activities such as sporting achievements. They diligently take on responsibilities such as being eco warriors, school councillors and members of the pupil 'GIFT' team.

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

In recent years, the school has undergone significant changes in leadership. Governors, together with the school, have been mindful that these changes should not impact adversely on staff's workload. Their focus has paid dividends. Staff are extremely proud to be part of the school and morale is high.

The school and governors are focused on ensuring that the standard of education continues to strengthen. The school has set out an ambitious curriculum which it has recently reviewed to accommodate the changing numbers of pupils on roll. This has been a seamless transition. Pupils learn well and mainly build a secure body of knowledge over time.

The school places a sharp focus on making sure that children get off to a strong start in learning to read. Children in the Reception Year learn corresponding letters and sounds straight away. Pupils in Year 1 learn to read more complex words so that, by the time they leave Year 2, pupils are confident and fluent readers. Where some pupils find learning to read difficult, the school identifies them promptly and offers a wealth of support to help them to catch up quickly. Older pupils speak animatedly of their passion for reading the wide range of books that the school provides.

Typically, pupils learn the curriculum content in order. This helps them to build on what they know and can do. On occasion though, in the early years, children are set written tasks that are overly complex. Consequently, a small number of children struggle to embed the important foundations of learning. Throughout the school, staff are passionate

about pupils' learning. Staff have a secure subject knowledge of the curriculum content that they deliver. However, sometimes the approaches that are used to deliver the important information do not help pupils to learn as well as they could.

Most pupils are ready for the next stage of their education. Staff provide timely and accurate feedback in lessons which helps pupils to identify and address misconceptions quickly. On occasion, though, the school's approach to providing feedback to written work is not as impactful as it intends. Sometimes, misunderstandings in pupils' transcription and subject knowledge are overlooked. This means that some pupils carry gaps in their knowledge over time.

Pupils with SEND are identified swiftly. The school is tenacious in its approach to securing and providing a wealth of appropriate support. Pupils with SEND benefit from being involved in the full life of the school.

Throughout the school, pupils are polite and considerate to each other and to adults. For instance, older pupils often act as positive role models for younger pupils. In the early years, children sensibly follow the school's routines. They play with each other kindly and happily.

Pupils experience a wide range of opportunities to learn beyond the academic curriculum. They learn about staying safe, both online and in their locality. Visitors share their experiences with pupils. For example, members of the emergency services talk to pupils about water and road safety. Pupils engage in activities such as residential visits, which help to strengthen their skills in teamwork and resilience. Pupils benefit from the range of sporting clubs on offer. They learn about people from different backgrounds and apply their knowledge of fundamental British values in showing tolerance and respect to others.

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 small number of subjects, some of the activities used to deliver the curriculum are not effective. This means that some pupils do not learn the important information as deeply as the school intends. The school should ensure that staff receive the appropriate guidance and support to develop pedagogical approaches, and consequently to implement the curriculum as effectively it is intended.
- On occasion, key errors in pupils' work go unchecked. Additionally, a small number of pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to correct these mistakes. This means that some pupils carry misconceptions over time. The school should ensure that staff identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge to enable pupils to build a secure body of knowledge over time.

- In the early years, occasionally, children are presented with new information before they have the requisite prior knowledge. Where this happens, some children have ongoing gaps in their learning. The school should ensure that children in the early years have sufficient opportunities to embed their foundational knowledge, particularly in writing, to provide a secure basis on which to build future learning.

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	119650
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10377976
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Monica Walczak
Headteacher	Jemma Stuttard
Website	www.st-charles.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 and 29 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- An executive headteacher was appointed in September 2024.
- This a Roman Catholic school, which is part of the Diocese of Salford.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in March 2017. Its next section 48 inspection is due before the end of the academic year 2025.
- 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). 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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. They met with subject leaders and with staff. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and spoke with groups of pupils about their learning.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in other subjects. They looked at documentation and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects.
- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher and the head of school.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority and a representative from the Diocese of Salford.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils during meetings throughout the school day, including at recreational times. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' attendance, welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also spoke with some parents and carers during the inspection.
- 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.

Inspection team

Sheena Clark, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Clare Lightbown

Ofsted Inspector

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