

Inspection of Holy Souls Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn

Wilworth Crescent, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 8QN

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Holy Souls Roman Catholic Primary School is a school where all pupils are welcome, irrespective of their faith or background. Pupils benefit from the positive relationships that they enjoy with each other and with staff. Pupils told inspectors that their friendships in school help to make them feel safe and happy.

Leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils to be successful academically and personally. Pupils, and children in the early years, gain confidence from the positive encouragement that they receive from staff. This supports pupils to be more resilient when they find learning difficult. They achieve well.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils treat each other and staff with respect. Pupils behave well in school and lessons are rarely disturbed. This allows pupils to get on with their work without interruption. There are effective systems in place for pupils to report any concerns to staff. On the rare occasions that bullying occurs, leaders deal with it quickly and effectively.

Pupils make a positive contribution to their local community. For example, pupils help to organise fundraising events for local charities, including food banks. Pupil librarians oversee the running of the school library. These leadership opportunities help to build pupils' character and prepare them well for life beyond the classroom.

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

Leaders have constructed a broad and balanced curriculum. This curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have carefully organised the important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn from the Reception Year to Year 6.

In the majority of subjects, teachers have the expertise that they need to introduce new learning to pupils with clarity. In most subjects, teachers check on what pupils remember from earlier content, including their understanding of important vocabulary. When needed, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to revisit previous learning. Many pupils know more and remember more over time. Overall, pupils, including children in the early years, learn well.

In one or two subjects, leaders have not assured themselves that the curriculum is being delivered effectively. In a few classes, teachers do not deliver some of the important knowledge and vocabulary that curriculum leaders have identified. In these subjects, on occasion, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge. These pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Leaders place high priority on ensuring that children in the Reception Year, and pupils in key stage 1, develop a secure knowledge of phonics. Staff are equipped to deliver the phonics programme well. Children in the Reception Year readily learn the sounds that letters represent. Leaders have ensured that pupils read books that are closely

matched to the sounds that they are learning. Most pupils who join the school in the Reception Year become confident readers by the end of key stage 1.

Leaders ensure that new arrivals to the school, including those pupils who speak English as an additional language, quickly build their phonics knowledge. Staff monitor pupils' understanding of phonics closely. They provide timely extra support for those pupils who need it. This helps these pupils to catch up with their peers.

Leaders promote and develop a love of reading well across the school. Pupils in key stage 2 access a range of high-quality books. Pupils in Year 6 enjoy acting as reading role models by sharing books with children in the Reception Year.

Leaders have effective systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with SEND at an early stage. Leaders work successfully with external partners to secure appropriate specialist support. Teachers skilfully adapt how they deliver the curriculum for pupils with SEND. Most pupils with SEND learn well alongside their peers.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They do their best to live up to the values of the school. Children in the Reception Year cooperate and share well. They are keen to follow instructions from staff.

A few pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. Leaders are taking effective action to improve the attendance of these pupils. However, some of these pupils continue to miss school. This has an impact on how well these pupils achieve.

Pupils benefit from a strong personal development offer. They learn about changes that their body and emotions will go through as they get older. Pupils are knowledgeable about British values and understand how these link to the values of the school. Pupils experience a wide variety of trips. These include visits to museums and places of local historical significance.

Governors are well informed about the school's curriculum. They support and challenge leaders effectively. Leaders and governors are considerate of staff's workload and well-being. Staff are positive about working at the school and value the support that they receive from leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are trained well to spot signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff follow clear procedures to report any concerns that they have about a pupil's welfare. Leaders work well with other professionals and organisations to ensure that pupils and their families receive timely and appropriate support.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe both in and out of school. For example, pupils recognise how to cross the road safely. They also learn how to protect themselves from harm when working and playing online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In one or two subjects, some teachers do not deliver some of the essential knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn. Occasionally, in these subjects, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers are fully equipped to deliver the curriculum consistently well across the school.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This limits how well these pupils learn. Leaders should ensure that they improve these pupils' rates of attendance. This is so that these pupils can benefit from the strong quality of education that the school provides.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	119517
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10242188
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	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Margaret Wells
Headteacher	Danielle Ellison
Website	www.holysouls.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Salford. The most recent section 48 inspection took place on 23 April 2018.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. As part of the deep dives, the inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, met with teachers and looked at children's and pupils' work. The inspectors also looked at the curriculum and pupils' work in some other curriculum subjects. The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They reviewed a range of documentation and spoke to leaders and staff. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about whether they felt safe in school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. Inspectors also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's staff survey.
- An inspector spoke with parents and carers. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.

Inspection team

David Robinson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gaynor Rennie

Ofsted Inspector

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