

Inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School

Beech Avenue, Farnworth, Bolton, Lancashire BL4 0BP

Inspection dates:	15 and 16 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and children in the early years, flourish in this welcoming and friendly school. They are proud to be part of the learning community. Pupils know that they are looked after by kind adults who know them well. They are happy and enjoy coming to school.

The school has high expectations for what pupils can achieve, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum. During lessons, pupils are highly focused on their learning, and they do their best to work hard. This includes in the early years, where children listen attentively and are eager to take part in activities. Pupils, including those with SEND, achieve highly across the curriculum.

The school has created a culture where pupils value their learning. Typically, classrooms are calm and harmonious. Pupils show kindness and respect, embodied by the school's values, to their peers and their teachers. Behaviour is impeccable across the school.

The school has the highest ambition for every pupil, regardless of their background or circumstance. It wants pupils to broaden their horizons through the rich set of experiences offered. For example, pupils spoke with enthusiasm about a history visit to Chester, participating in Bolton's 'bonga conga' and trips to the pantomime.

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

The school has thoughtfully designed a curriculum which incorporates the knowledge, skills and experiences that pupils at the school need. In early years, it has thought carefully about the building blocks of knowledge that help children to learn over time. Across most subjects, the school has mapped out the vocabulary and knowledge that teachers expect pupils to learn. However, in a small number of subjects, curriculum thinking lacks precision. In these subjects, the school is still determining the specific content that pupils should learn. This means that, sometimes, teachers move on to new learning before pupils have fully grasped a deep understanding of new concepts and ideas. This hampers pupils from learning all that they could.

Across subjects, teachers use strong subject knowledge to design activities that help pupils to learn subject content well. They make clear to pupils the links between different subjects and earlier learning. This helps pupils, including those with SEND, to apply what they know already when they are learning something new. Teachers use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions as they arise. This means that gaps in pupils' learning are quickly addressed. Additionally, the school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND in a timely and effective way. Consequently, teachers purposefully adapt the delivery of the curriculum to enable these pupils to follow the same aspirational curriculum as their peers.

The school has prioritised reading. From the start of the Nursery Year, staff design activities with a clear focus on developing children's language and communication. Children are immersed in a language-rich environment and benefit highly from daily

stories, rhymes and songs. Reception children make a strong start in their reading journey and are taught phonics from the outset. Staff deliver the phonics programme effectively. Pupils read from books that are matched accurately to sounds they already know. Those pupils who find reading more difficult are quickly spotted and given help to catch up. Across key stages, pupils benefit from a vast array of books that are reflective of the school and wider community. Pupils relish being read to by their teachers.

Pupils display obvious enthusiasm for learning. They are fully engrossed in their work, with every moment being used productively. Their conduct in lessons and at social times is excellent. Children in early years become captivated in explorative activities, such as crafting hedgehog hotels, seasonal nature walks and building obstacle courses. Pupils attend school regularly and on time.

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the school's work. Pupils are encouraged to develop a strong sense of community pride. They are active citizens in the wider community through charity work, litter-picking initiatives and contributing to local food banks. Pupils learn about the importance of equality, inclusion and tolerance. They are vocal about celebrating difference and creating a community where everyone is welcome. Pupils learn to keep mentally and physically healthy. They make excellent use of the range of clubs and activities on offer. In early years, children enjoy a wide range of activities that foster their curiosity about the world.

Staff feel very well supported with workload and well-being. They appreciate the training and development opportunities that help them to improve their practice. Staff feel valued and are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the transparent and collaborative approach taken by the school. Governors have clear oversight and support the school in making decisions in the best interests of pupils.

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, the school is in the process of identifying the specific knowledge that it wants pupils to learn. As a result, some pupils in these subjects do not develop and deepen their knowledge as well as they should. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, teachers are clear about the most important things that pupils need to know and remember.

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	105245
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10321266
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Maureen Longworth
Headteacher	Linda Chadwick
Website	www.ourlady.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in March 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place before the end of 2025.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

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.

- 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 spoke with the headteacher and other leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector held a meeting with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with representatives of the diocese and of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- The lead inspector reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors reviewed the curriculum in other subjects and reviewed samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff.

Inspection team

Kate Bowker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Amy Fidler

Ofsted Inspector

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