

Inspection of a good school: St Charles RC School

Knowles Street, Rishton, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 4HT

Inspection dates:

28–29 January 2020

Outcome

St Charles RC School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Charles is at the heart of its community. Relationships between staff, pupils and their families are caring and supportive. The pupils that I spoke to told me that teachers 'make learning fun'. Pupils are happy. They enjoy learning new things. Pupils told me that they feel safe at school. The vast majority of parents and carers share this view. Pupils say that if they have any worries or concerns, they can turn to staff for support.

Leaders have high expectations for their pupils. They support pupils to achieve well. Pupils appreciate this and try hard. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils say that bullying is rare. School records, the opinions of staff and parents' views confirm this. Pupils are confident that staff will sort out any problems should they arise.

Pupils enjoy the roles and responsibilities that they have in the school. Year 6 pupils are buddies for children in the Reception class. Pupils value the wide range of clubs after school. Several pupils learn to play a musical instrument. They take part in sports competitions. Teachers organise a raft of trips in and beyond the local community. This brings learning to life for pupils.

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

Senior leaders have planned the new curriculum well. With subject leaders they have considered the skills and knowledge that they want pupils to learn. They use what pupils already know to plan the next stages of learning. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is similar to other pupils nationally. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Most children enter the school with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age. Children get off to a strong start in the early years. Staff in the early years have created an environment both in the classroom and outside that is well organised. The early years leader plans activities to spark children's imagination. She ensures that there are ample opportunities for children to develop their early reading, writing and

mathematics skills. Most children reach a good level of development by the end of the early years. They are well prepared for Year 1.

Leaders have placed a high priority on developing pupils' love of reading. Every classroom has a reading area. Pupils told me that they love reading. They know of many authors and poets. They have favourite books and can explain why they like them.

Teachers are confident in teaching children to read. Teachers and teaching assistants lead phonics sessions. However, there has been no recent training for teaching assistants. Teachers match books well to the sounds that younger pupils are learning in phonics. Staff provide effective support if any pupils fall behind. With the support of the local authority, teachers have changed the way that they plan guided reading sessions. This helps pupils to deepen their understanding of a wide range of books and reading materials.

The changes that leaders have made to subjects other than English and mathematics are still quite new. Subject leaders' plans are thorough. They sample pupils' work across year groups. However, the feedback that they provide to teachers can sometimes be too vague.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. Leaders work effectively with external agencies and charities. They have been successful in applying for bespoke equipment for pupils with disabilities. Leaders meet pupils' needs well. Pupils with SEND learn alongside their classmates. They have full access to the curriculum.

Pupils' behave well in lessons and during breaks. They are respectful and caring of one another. Pupils told inspectors that bullying 'rarely happens here'. Pupils take pride in their school and the important role they play in contributing to the local community. Attendance rates are higher than those seen nationally.

Pupils' learning goes beyond the academic curriculum. Teachers invite visitors to the school who work in a range of professions. This raises pupils' aspirations. Pupils take part in a wide range of after-school activities.

The growing in faith together (GIFT) group is proactive in considering people facing challenges. For example, the group made Christmas cards for prisoners last term. Teachers deepen pupils' understanding of a range of faiths and cultures. Pupils have a strong understanding of the importance of respect and tolerance.

Governors know the school well. With the acting headteacher, they consider the views of staff on their workload and well-being. A governor is part of the staff well-being committee, which organises a range of activities to encourage a work-life balance. Members of staff told me that they feel valued by governors and senior leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding children are effective.

Leaders make sure that keeping children safe is a priority. They have identified potential risks and taken appropriate action. Staff receive regular training and information. They know what signs to look for if they have concerns about a child. Systems within the school are thorough and well known to all staff.

Leaders ensure that children and families get the support that they need. Pupils could explain how to keep themselves safe when they are online. They learn how to keep safe in their local community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Senior leaders have placed a high priority on reading which has been embraced by the staff team. Leaders should provide teaching assistants with training in teaching phonics and opportunities to observe best practice. This is to increase their confidence so that they have greater impact on developing pupils reading skills.
- Some foundation subject leaders are at an early stage in evaluating the quality of the curriculum in their subject. They monitor how well pupils are achieving by sampling pupils' work. The feedback given to teachers needs to be more precise. Plans are in place to address this. Subject leaders need to have a greater influence over the quality of education in their area of responsibility so that pupils can deepen their knowledge and skills.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged St Charles RC School to be good on 17 November 2015.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	119650
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10111004
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	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Neil Yates
Acting Headteacher	Patrick Kennedy
Website	st-charles.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 November 2015

Information about this school

- The acting headteacher was appointed in January 2019.
- The temporary assistant headteachers were appointed in July 2019.
- During last academic year, some pupils experienced disruption to learning due to instability in staffing. This is no longer the case.
- The chair of the governing body is a national leader of governance.
- The last section 48 inspection was on 17 March 2017.

Information about this inspection

- I considered the school's curriculum. I scrutinised the school's approach to the teaching of phonics, early reading, writing and geography. I met with the leaders of these subjects. I viewed examples of pupils' work, visited lessons and spoke to teachers and pupils.
- I met with the acting headteacher, teachers and six members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- I spoke to two representatives from the local authority. I also spoke to a representative from the diocese.

- I scrutinised the school’s single central safeguarding record. I spoke to staff about their training and their understanding of safeguarding.
- I visited lessons in all classes.
- I considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, and the free-text responses. I spoke to parents during the inspection.
- I considered the responses to Ofsted’s online staff questionnaire. I also spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.
- I listened to pupils read and spoke to them about behaviour and attitudes.

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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