

Inspection of St Boniface RC Primary School

Yew Street, Salford, Greater Manchester M7 2HL

Inspection dates:	7 and 8 January 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at St Boniface. They enjoy being part of a welcoming, friendly and caring community. They have positive relationships with their peers and staff. Pupils, including children in the early years, typically behave well in class and around the school. Most pupils listen attentively and remain focused on tasks during lessons.

The school encourages pupils to develop their talents in a variety of areas, such as in football, music and choir. Pupils also have opportunities to broaden their experiences through educational trips and visits, including to an outdoor residential centre, a zoo and a science museum. Pupils contribute to the life of the school by taking on various leadership roles.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievements, but these ambitions are not fully realised. This is because previous curriculum choices and significant staff changes have had an impact on the achievement of some pupils. Pupils now benefit from more stable staffing and follow new curriculums. However, the quality and delivery of some curriculums, including in the early years, vary. In addition, the school has not fully identified or addressed some of the barriers to pupils' learning.

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

The school has made significant improvements in several areas, including the school culture, attendance and pupils' behaviour. Previously, a high proportion of pupils were persistently absent from school. The school has put in place a range of effective strategies, such as a new reward system, which have successfully reduced the number of pupils who are regularly absent from school.

The school has a calm and orderly atmosphere. It has established clear rules and routines for behaviour. These are understood and followed by children in the early years and by older pupils. Pupils who struggle to regulate their behaviour receive effective support from the school's pastoral team.

The school's provision for pupils' wider development prepares them well for later life. For example, pupils learn about respect and tolerance. The school promotes an understanding of physical and mental health. Pupils make presentations about their work at a local university. This helps to raise their aspirations.

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum structure. It is in the process of reviewing and refining its subject curriculums. In some subjects, the school has logically ordered the knowledge that it wants pupils to gain. This helps pupils to build on prior learning and remember more. However, in other subjects, the school is still in the process of developing what it wants pupils to learn and the order in which this new content should be taught. This is also the case in the early years, where the school has not defined some of the important knowledge that children should learn in some areas of learning. This hinders staff in designing appropriate activities for pupils. In addition, it prevents pupils from developing a solid body of knowledge.

In subjects where there is a lack of clarity about what pupils should be learning, including in some areas of learning in the early years, staff do not use their checks on pupils' learning well. This prevents staff from identifying and addressing pupils' misconceptions effectively. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

The school places a strong emphasis on developing communication and language in the early years. The school has recently introduced a new phonics programme. Many staff have received training and this has helped to improve the delivery of the phonics scheme. However, there is still some variability in its implementation. Some staff have not been suitably trained to support pupils who find reading difficult. This limits some pupils' ability to read with confidence and fluency.

In the recent past, the systems to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were not effective or timely. Although improvements have been made, further work is needed to ensure that pupils' needs are identified quickly and accurately. This makes it difficult for staff to provide the necessary support for these pupils. Weaknesses in curriculum design further limit the progress that pupils with SEND make through the curriculum.

Governors have supported the school in achieving stability in staffing. They are committed to working with the school to improve the quality of education. While some of this work is still in its early stages, governors are increasingly challenging the school to improve. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the efforts made to consider their workload and prioritise their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, including in the early years, the school is still in the process of defining what pupils should learn and in what order. This makes it difficult for staff to design activities that help pupils to build their knowledge over time. The school should finalise its curriculum thinking so that staff are clear about what should be taught and when.
- In some subjects, including in the early years, staff do not use assessment strategies well enough to check on how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. This prevents staff from identifying and addressing the gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school should ensure that staff are well equipped to use assessment strategies effectively to identify gaps in pupils' prior learning and adjust their teaching accordingly.

- Some staff lack the necessary expertise to implement the phonics scheme effectively to support weaker readers. As a result, some pupils do not develop their phonics knowledge as quickly or securely as they should. The school should continue to improve staff expertise in teaching phonics to help pupils become fluent and confident readers.
- Until recently, the systems and processes for identifying pupils with SEND lacked sufficient rigour. This means that the school did not always identify the needs of these pupils' promptly to ensure that the support for these pupils had the desired impact. The school should continue to improve its systems for identifying and supporting pupils with SEND to ensure they are supported effectively to achieve well.

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	105962
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10347997
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	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Victoria Davies
Headteacher	Stella Groarke
Website	www.stbonifacesalford.com
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Salford. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2018. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in the 2025/26 academic year.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2022. There have been several other changes in leadership and staff recently.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school provision for pupils.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision of pupils.

Information about this inspection

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and members of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the governing body. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority and with a representative of the Diocese of Salford.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences in school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation documents and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also looked at the curriculum and pupils' work in some other subjects.
- An inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The lead inspector spoke with some parents.

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Louise McArdle

Ofsted Inspector

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