

Inspection of a good school: St Bede's Catholic High School

Talbot Road, Lytham, Lytham St Annes, Lancashire FY8 4JL

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 November 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils are happy to attend St Bede's Catholic High School. They enjoy the sense of belonging to a caring school community.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), strive to show the values of 'being a BEDE'. Typically, they engage in their learning and behave well. Most pupils are polite and enjoy helping each other. For instance, the welcome ambassadors help Year 7 pupils to settle into school well.

Pupils relish their roles of responsibility. They enjoy being role models as respect ambassadors and house captains. This builds their confidence to work with different people. Pupils value their school retreat day. They appreciate the activities which teach them about the importance of helping others and being kind to themselves.

Pupils recognise the high expectations that the school has for their achievement. They work hard and are keen to succeed. However, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because the delivery of the curriculum across different subjects is uneven.

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

In many subjects, the school has taken effective steps to strengthen the curriculum. This means that pupils benefit from a more ambitious curriculum than they did in the past. Pupils can choose to study a broad range of subjects. In most subjects, the curriculum is designed well so that pupils can build on their knowledge.

The curriculum is delivered well in some subjects. Here, teachers explain new learning clearly and they use assessment strategies to review pupils' learning. This helps pupils to

build their knowledge securely over time. However, in other subjects, activities are not matched well enough to subject content. Gaps in pupils' learning, are not identified or addressed quickly enough. This hampers the progress of some pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, through the curriculum. While some pupils achieve well, others do not learn all that they should. In some subjects, the school is alert to the strengths and weaknesses in curriculum delivery. However, this is not true in other subjects. This prevents the school from taking the necessary steps to help teachers to improve their practice.

The school has an effective system to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff support these pupils well so that they can access the same curriculum as their peers.

The school is meticulous in designing reading programmes to support pupils who find reading difficult, especially at key stage 3. Even so, the school does not promote reading for pleasure sufficiently well. Many pupils do not enjoy reading independently. This limits their understanding and appreciation of the wider world.

Pupils understand the new behaviour systems. They abide by the new approaches. This helps teachers to set a calm and orderly start to lessons. Pupils' attendance has a high priority. The systems to promote good attendance are effective. Consequently, absence rates are decreasing over time.

The new personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum is designed to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about keeping healthy and being an active citizen. For instance, pupils raise funds to tackle homelessness and hold community fairs. Many pupils enjoy taking part in the school drama performances. This helps them to speak in public, to gain confidence and to make new friends.

The school supports pupils to make informed career choices. For instance, pupils visit different universities and colleges. The school is in the process of enhancing pupils' experiences of the world of work. In the main, pupils are prepared well for their next step in education, employment or training.

The governing body understand what they need to do to tackle weaknesses in the school. They work closely with the school to evaluate the impact of policy change. The school consult with staff before embedding new systems. This helps staff to manage their workload. Most staff are happy working at the school.

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, the activities that teachers choose are not appropriate in identifying and addressing missing knowledge. This means that pupils, including disadvantaged

pupils, do not progress through the curriculum as well as they should. The school should support teachers to design learning activities which help pupils to know and remember more.

- In some subjects, the school does not check how well the curriculum is being delivered. This means that some weaknesses in the delivery of the curriculum are not addressed well enough. The school should develop a stronger oversight of how well the curriculum is being delivered, so that it can support teachers to help pupils to learn what they should.
- The school does not promote reading for pleasure effectively. This limits how widely and often pupils read. The school should encourage pupils to read a wide range of books to foster an enjoyment of reading.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2014.

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 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	119788
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10291424
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	823
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ian Gili-Ross
Headteacher	Paul Marsden
Website	www.stbedeslytham.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- There have been some recent changes to the staffing and governance. This includes the appointment of a chair of the governing body, a deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher.
- The school is a Roman Catholic school in the Diocese of Lancaster. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2023. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place before March 2028.
- The school uses four registered alternative providers and two unregistered providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders. Inspectors met with a range of other staff and leaders during the inspection. Inspectors also met with a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of the local authority and the school improvement partner.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during social times and during movement in school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and teachers, visited a sample of lessons, reviewed samples of pupils' work and spoke with some pupils.
- Inspectors also met with subject leaders to review other areas of the curriculum.
- Inspectors spoke with the leaders responsible for pupils' wider development, pupil premium, behaviour and attendance, alternative provision, early careers teachers, careers, SEND and reading.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' self-evaluation, attendance and behaviour records.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

Alexia Gargrave

Ofsted Inspector

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