

Inspection of St Gabriel's Catholic Primary School

Queensway, Higher Folds, Leigh, Lancashire WN7 2XG

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy attending this vibrant and caring school where everyone is welcomed and respected. Pupils rise to the school's high expectations, which is reflected in their work and behaviour. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils achieve very well. Children in the early years have fun while developing routines and positive attitudes to learning. This continues as they move up through the school. Pupils show kindness towards each other and have good manners.

Pupils make the most of the school's extensive range of visits, including to museums, galleries and places of worship. These are often linked to the curriculum and deepen their understanding of art, culture and the wider world. Pupils understand and celebrate difference, including in race and religion. As school councillors, eco-councillors, subject ambassadors and prefects, they play an active role in helping to improve their school. They have an increasing understanding of their responsibilities as members of their local community and citizens of the world. They work hard to help local and global charities.

As they move through the school, pupils discuss with increasing confidence and maturity issues such as consent and healthy relationships.

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

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum which is matched carefully to the needs of its pupils. Staff have set out the knowledge and skills that all pupils, including children in the early years, need to achieve well. To ensure that pupils build on prior learning, staff have given careful thought to the order in which pupils learn subject content, successfully taking account of mixed-age classes. The curriculum is designed to develop subject-specific vocabulary, which pupils are beginning to use well. Pupils with SEND have the help that they need to follow the curriculum successfully alongside their peers.

The school has made sure that staff have strong knowledge of the subjects that they teach. This knowledge contributes to their successful teaching of the curriculum. Staff give clear explanations of new learning. Usually, teachers choose appropriate learning activities. However, in some subjects, for a small number of pupils, these activities are not well matched to learning needs. As a result, a minority of pupils in some classes are too dependent on support from adults and waste too much learning time waiting for the help that they need.

Staff regularly check pupils' understanding to identify strengths and misconceptions. They use this information well to adapt future teaching.

The school promotes a love of reading. From the start of the early years, staff immerse children in a language-rich environment in which they share stories, sing songs and learn rhymes. Pupils have many opportunities to hear adults read to them, to choose books from the well-stocked library and to take part in reading events. They enjoy reading for pleasure.

Staff who teach early reading undertake appropriate training. They teach the phonics programme very effectively. Pupils read books that closely match the sounds that they have learned. Adults are quick to identify and help those pupils who find reading difficult. Almost all pupils learn to read with accuracy, fluency and confidence.

Staff carefully identify the needs of pupils with SEND, using external specialists when necessary. The school ensures that it provides these pupils with the help that they need to participate in all aspects of school life.

Staff apply the clear behaviour policy very effectively, including using rewards. Pupils follow instructions, concentrate well and move quickly between learning activities. Social times are orderly and pleasant. Pupils enjoy playing with each other and helping others. The school works very well with vulnerable pupils and their families. It has improved the attendance and behaviour of the small number of pupils who struggle to meet the school's expectations.

Pupils benefit from an exceptional range of experiences to enhance their personal development and develop their interests and talents. These opportunities include taking part in talent shows. Pupils with SEND participate in a public speaking competition which contributes to building their self-esteem. Pupils take part in activities such as sustainability projects and helping the elderly. Visitors, including representatives of a variety of professions, give pupils an awareness of career opportunities.

The school has very positive relationships with parents and carers. It expertly managed significant staffing changes during the last academic year. Staff are proud to work at this school. They value the school taking into account their workload and well-being when making decisions. The highly skilled and experienced governing body has had a very strong impact on the school's development.

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, for a minority of pupils, staff do not match activities well to learning needs. As a result, at times, these pupils cannot attempt tasks without help from an adult. When this happens, too much learning time is wasted as they wait for support. The school should ensure a more consistent match between tasks and learning needs, so that all pupils reach their full academic potential across the curriculum.

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	106506
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10321310
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	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Daniel Melling
Headteacher	Cathie Williams
Website	www.saintgabrielsprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision for any pupils.
- This is a voluntary-aided school in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection was in April 2018. The next is expected during the academic year 2024/25.

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 school's first routine inspection 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.
- 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 had discussions with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team.
- An inspector had a discussion with governors, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector had discussions with a local authority school improvement partner from the Leigh, Lowton, Golborne Consortia, another representative of Wigan Local Authority and a school improvement partner provided for the school by the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history and music. As part of this process, they had discussions with subject leaders, visited lessons, had discussions with pupils, listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult and looked at work in books. For some other subject areas, they scrutinised the curriculum and pupils' work in books.
- An inspector had a discussion with the special educational needs coordinator to help evaluate provision and practice for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors had discussions with groups of pupils about their experience of school. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. They spoke to a cross section of staff about their experience of working in the school, including their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Liz Kelly, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Barraclough

Ofsted Inspector

Karen Morris

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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