

Inspection of St Oswald's Roman Catholic Primary School, Accrington

Hartley Avenue, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 0NN

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 March 2025

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since September 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being at school. They are proud to belong to the school's welcoming community. Pupils willingly follow the school's well-established routines. Their behaviour is impeccable in class and as they move around the school. Pupils focus on their learning exceptionally well.

Children settle quickly in the early years. They grow in confidence and independence. Pupils benefit from the effective support of caring staff, who know them well as they progress through the school.

Pupils enjoy the many opportunities that the school provides to make a positive contribution to their school and wider community. For example, playground leaders support other pupils skilfully to play together at social times. Pupils learn how to value and preserve the natural world through activities such as planting trees, exploring the school's outdoor areas and recycling materials. They recognise how pursuits such as these also contribute to their own physical and mental well-being.

The school has high ambition for pupils' academic success. It encourages pupils to dream big and provides many positive role models for them. Pupils make the most of the high-quality opportunities on offer. Most pupils achieve well. Pupils are well prepared for their secondary phase of education by the end of Year 6.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious. It takes into consideration the small size of the school. The curriculum is designed to support teachers to provide suitable learning for their mixed-aged classes.

Pupils build up a useful body of knowledge that they can recall and apply easily in many areas of the curriculum. However, in a small number of subjects, including mathematics, the school has not clarified well enough the order that key information should be taught. As a result, there are occasions when teachers are not clear what they need to focus on with the pupils in their class. At times, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge or misconceptions. When this happens, their learning is not as effective as it could be.

The school expects teachers to regularly revisit prior learning and to check pupils' understanding carefully before moving on to something new. Most of the time, this does happen. However, the school does not ensure that this is consistently the case. Occasionally, teachers do not identify when pupils need additional support or practice to secure their learning. For example, there are some pupils at the early stages of reading who have not developed the fluency and accuracy that they need. Some children in the early years do not learn to correctly form letters. Gaps in pupils' learning such as these affect how well pupils achieve across the curriculum as they progress through the school.

The school places a high focus on reading. Pupils enjoy times allocated to this. Their interest in stories, songs and rhymes is captured in the early years. The school ensures

that children's understanding of language and sounds develops swiftly and securely, so that they are ready to learn how to use phonics knowledge to read and write words in the Reception Year and Year 1. For most pupils, the school's phonics programme is effective. Pupils practise their reading regularly. Most become accomplished readers by the end of Year 6.

The school ensures that staff have the knowledge and expertise to identify pupils that may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers provide effective support in class so that these pupils can access the curriculum. Most pupils with SEND achieve well.

The school provides exceptionally well-thought-out support for pupils' personal development. It ensures that pupils develop a rich understanding and appreciation of the diverse world that they live in. Pupils are keen to share their impressive knowledge about how people are different from one another and fundamental British values. They demonstrate maturity and sensitivity when talking about others who may have different opinions to their own. Pupils' positive attitudes prepare them well to embrace the wider world when they are older.

Pupils are polite and considerate. They understand how their behaviour impacts on others. Older pupils provide an excellent example for younger peers to follow. Pupils happily follow the school's values and rules. They understand that this makes the school environment a safe and happy place for the whole school community.

The school and the governing body know the community that they serve well. They work closely together to ensure that pupils receive the best possible standard of education. They also ensure that teachers and curriculum leaders receive suitable support to manage their workload in designing and delivering the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, the school has not ensured that teachers are as clear as they could be about what knowledge they need to focus on with pupils of different ages within their class, including in the mathematics curriculum. This makes it more difficult for teachers to design the most appropriate learning for their pupils. It also sometimes results in pupils not learning what they need to be ready for their next stages of learning. The school should ensure that it provides teachers with the information about what it expects pupils to know and the order that learning should occur.
- The school has not ensured that teachers use assessment information consistently and effectively to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge or misconceptions. This

sometimes includes pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. When this happens, pupils struggle to make sense of new information and their achievement across the curriculum is uneven as a result. The school should ensure that there is greater consistency in how thoroughly teachers check pupils' understanding before deciding what they need to learn next.

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	119657
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10348200
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	152
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Jordan
Headteacher	Cath Kippax
Website	www.stoswaldsromancatholicprimaryschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 September 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a religious character. It is part of the Diocese of Salford. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in February 2020.
- There is a new headteacher in post since the time of the last inspection.
- The school does not currently make use of 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 in the school.
- An inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. They spoke with the leaders of these areas of the curriculum. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- Inspectors visited lessons and discussed pupils' learning in other areas of the curriculum.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- An inspector listened to pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- 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.
- An inspector spoke with parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey and parents' free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- An inspector visited the school's breakfast club.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephanie Swift

Ofsted Inspector

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