

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Cathedral Catholic Primary School, Lancaster

Balmoral Road, Lancaster, Lancashire LA1 3BT

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 March 2025

Outcome

The Cathedral Catholic Primary School, Lancaster has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has a vision for its pupils to enjoy a rich variety of experiences. This is brought to life at this welcoming school, where there are high expectations of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils feel happy, safe and secure in school. They achieve well across many subjects.

Pupils rise to the high standards of behaviour that the school expects. Pupils are kind and considerate to each other. They enjoy valuable relationships with their peers and adults. Staff provide effective support for pupils who need help to manage their emotions.

Pupils benefit from the broad range of opportunities available. For example, pupils take part in sports, choir and movie clubs. They learn about the positive difference that they can make for others through charitable fundraising. Pupils are proud of the leadership roles that they hold, such as prefects and school councillors.

Pupils enjoy residential trips, where they challenge themselves in canoeing, rock climbing and caving activities. These experiences help them to develop interests and talents as well as their self-esteem. Pupils benefit from a range of visits, such as to the theatre and to the zoo.

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

The school has designed a curriculum which is ambitious for all pupils. It has identified the knowledge and skills that pupils will learn, and the order in which they will be taught. The curriculum has been written with the school's context in mind. As a result, pupils

understand their place in the world. They appreciate the historical and geographical significance of living in Lancaster.

The school ensures that staff have the knowledge and expertise to deliver the curriculum effectively across a number of subjects. Typically, staff are prompt to address any misconceptions that pupils may have about their learning. This prepares most pupils well to learn new concepts. Occasionally, staff do not address gaps that some pupils have in their knowledge. When this happens, some pupils move on to new learning before they are ready.

In the main, staff select activities that enable pupils to develop their knowledge in a logical and coherent way. However, from time to time, the activities that pupils complete do not support them to deepen their knowledge as well as they could.

The school is ambitious for pupils with SEND. Typically, pupils with SEND are provided with classwork and resources that are appropriately adapted, so that they can learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Reading is a priority. Staff are well trained to support children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 to learn to read. They quickly identify when pupils do not keep pace with the phonics programme. Staff give pupils the help that they need to catch up. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know and have learned. This helps them to read with increasing fluency and confidence.

In the early years, children enjoy learning about the world creatively through play, inside and outside of the classroom. They enjoy listening to and joining in with stories, rhymes and songs. This helps them to learn and practise using new words. Children develop their mathematical understanding well. They gain the knowledge that they need to be well prepared for Year 1 and beyond.

Throughout the school, there is a calm, orderly and positive atmosphere. Pupils, and children in the early years, are polite, friendly and confident when talking to visitors. The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance.

The school considers the experiences to support pupils' personal development carefully. Pupils visit towns and cities, such as Keswick and Liverpool. They relish the extra-curricular opportunities provided, such as learning to play tennis. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and how to stay physically and mentally healthy. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governors are effective in checking how well the school operates at all levels. They have a keen focus on the quality of education and support the school on its journey of continuous improvement. This has made a positive contribution to maintaining the standards identified at the previous inspection. Staff are positive about what the school does to support their workload and well-being. For example, staff appreciate the training and time the school provides for them to carry out their duties effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, the school does not ensure that staff design activities that help pupils to develop sufficient depth of knowledge in the subjects that they study. This prevents some pupils from achieving as well as they could. The school should ensure that it supports staff to design learning activities that consistently prepare pupils well for each stage of their education.
- The school has not ensured that staff rectify gaps and misconceptions in some pupils' knowledge promptly. This means that some pupils move on to new learning before they are ready. The school should ensure that staff address pupils' misunderstandings in a timely manner, so that pupils build their knowledge securely over time.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in May 2016.

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	119621
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10377975
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	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Clare Nolan Barnes
Headteacher	Nicola Holt
Website	www.cathedral.lancs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers breakfast and after-school provision.
- This is a Catholic school in the Diocese of Lancaster. It was previously inspected under section 48 of the Education Act for schools of a religious character in June 2022. Its next section 48 inspection will take place in the 2027/28 academic year.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other leaders, members of the governing body and a range of staff at the school. The inspector spoke with representatives from the local authority and the diocese.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with most pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils when moving around the school.
- The inspector spoke to parents and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils to gather their views about the school.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and their well-being. He considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including those related to the governance of the school.

Inspection team

Mark Hazzard, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025