

Inspection of Ss John Fisher and Thomas More Roman Catholic High School

Gibfield Road, Colne, Lancashire BB8 8JT

Inspection dates: 28–29 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The pupils with whom we spoke said that the school is a safe, welcoming place, where they are happy. They like their teachers, their lessons and the activities that are on offer. Most pupils do not think bullying is a problem. If it does happen, they are confident that it will be dealt with.

Pupils behave well. In lessons, they answer questions confidently and try hard. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. However, some pupils' learning has been affected because of their teachers being absent. This has meant that not all pupils have benefited from a good quality of education. Some pupils currently at the school have gaps in their knowledge.

Pupils feel well supported. They said that the school is a caring environment. Year 7 pupils described how teachers helped them to settle in quickly and make friends. Pupils embrace the school's mission statement of 'Let our bright colours shine'. They are kind to each other. For example, they have raised money so that all pupils can go on trips.

Pupils enjoy the range of extra-curricular activities offered. These include drama, art, music and sport. Pupils value the opportunity to take part in whole-school productions. These experiences support pupils' personal development well.

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

Leaders are aspirational for all pupils. They want pupils to develop into the best that they can be. Last year, however, pupils did not achieve as well as they should in their GCSE examinations.

Leaders recognised that the previous curriculum was not good enough. They have taken swift and appropriate action to address the weaknesses in the curriculum, as well as the consequences of teachers being absent. However, although progress is being made, work to improve how well the new curriculum is delivered is in its early stages. There is still more to do to ensure that the new curriculum is well planned and implemented so that pupils' outcomes improve.

Leaders have ensured that the new curriculum is ambitious. All pupils study subjects at key stage 3 in line with the national curriculum. Leaders have taken steps to increase the number of pupils entering the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) in key stage 4. However, the weaknesses in the previous curriculum mean that some current pupils have too many gaps in their knowledge. This is because, in some subjects, teachers did not think carefully enough about the content of the curriculum.

Leadership of most subject areas is now strong. Most teachers know what to teach and in which order to teach it. However, current pupils still do not always learn

things in sufficient depth. This means that some pupils do not know more or remember enough over time.

Leaders have prioritised the mental health and well-being of pupils. For example, they have appointed a full-time mental health worker. Pupils are encouraged to be healthy through their diet and lifestyle. Pupils at this school are prepared for life in modern Britain. They understand British values and show respect and tolerance towards others. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated. Leaders are in the process of developing the personal, health, social and economic education (PSHE) curriculum to improve further pupils' experiences.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported with their learning during lessons. Even so, some pupils with SEND are withdrawn from some lessons, such as languages, humanities and technology, to have extra literacy sessions. This means that these pupils are missing important lessons, and that they have to catch up at additional times. Leaders are in the process of changing this to ensure that pupils with SEND have the same access to the curriculum as their peers.

Most pupils are courteous and polite. Corridors are calm. Pupils are friendly to each other.

Careers education, information and guidance are strong. Pupils who are disadvantaged benefit from targeted careers support to guide them on to aspirational next steps. However, these pupils do not make as much progress across the curriculum as they should. Although most pupils attend school regularly, some disadvantaged pupils do not attend school as regularly as their peers.

For the most part, staff said that they are happy working at the school. They said that leaders listen and respond to their needs. Staff appreciate the support that they receive from leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. All staff are fully trained and know the processes for keeping pupils safe. The school works closely with external agencies such as children's social care and the local authority. Pupils know who to go to if they have any concerns. They feel confident in doing this. The pastoral team knows all pupils well. Pupils are aware of how to stay safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the past, weaknesses in curriculum design, and gaps in pupils' knowledge, led to a sharp decline in outcomes for pupils at the end of Year 11. Leaders have invested in

strengthening the leadership of subject areas. However, the implementation of the improved curriculum is still in its early stages. Leaders should ensure that teachers in all subjects are consistent in identifying precisely what pupils need to learn in each unit of study. This will enable teachers to identify and remedy any gaps in pupils' knowledge.

- Leaders have a clear vision of where the curriculum needs to be. They are in the process of implementing plans to improve the quality of the curriculum. In some subjects, teachers are already using strategies to help pupils to remember. However, this is variable both across and within subjects. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers in all subject areas are planning for the retention of knowledge.
- Currently, pupils with SEND are withdrawn from subjects such as languages, humanities, technology and creative arts to have extra literacy support. For the most part, teachers in these subject areas ensure that pupils catch up on lessons they have missed. However, leaders recognise the negative impact of pupils being withdrawn from a number of subjects. They must guarantee that pupils with SEND have the same equality of access to the curriculum as their peers.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged do not attend school as regularly as their peers. This negatively affects their learning and progress across the curriculum. Leaders need to increase the range of strategies that they use to ensure that disadvantaged pupils attend school regularly.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	119785
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10133430
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	749
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John McManus
Headteacher	Clare Hayes
Website	www.fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 January 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The school's last section 48 inspection was in January 2016.
- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils at The Heights, Coal Clough Academy and Burnley Football Club.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, we met with the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team, middle leaders and a wide range of teaching and support staff. We also met with governors and representatives from the local authority and the diocese.
- We met with pupils to discuss their views about school life.
- We reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, subject leaders' curriculum plans, attendance and behaviour records and the procedures in place to keep pupils safe.

- We also considered the 50 responses to Ofsted’s online survey for staff. We also considered the views of 159 parents in their responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, including the comments received via the free-text facility. There were no responses to the pupils’ survey.
- We did deep dives in English, mathematics, science, history and geography. We met with subject leaders for each of these subjects, visited some lessons, looked at pupils’ work and spoke to pupils and teachers. We also considered other subjects, including languages, food technology and creative arts.

Inspection team

Rachel Goodwin, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Dean Logan	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Sharon Asquith	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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