

Inspection of Banks St Stephen's CofE School

Greaves Hall Avenue, Banks, Southport, Merseyside PR9 8BL

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 September 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They arrive each day eager to learn. Leaders, staff and governors are united in the expectation that all pupils receive the best possible start to their education. Pupils told inspectors that the staff make school a safe and happy place to learn. Pupils said that they make friends easily because people care about each other. Any arguments are resolved quickly. Pupils are confident that should bullying occur, staff will sort it out swiftly.

Pupils strive to follow the school's Christian values of 'Belonging, Serving, Succeeding'. They work hard in lessons and their behaviour is good. Older pupils contribute to the life of the school as librarians and as members of committees.

Pupils play an important role in the local community. Their friendships with residents at a local retirement home have flourished during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Links with local businesses give pupils a taste of the world of work and raise their aspirations for the future.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that help to develop their confidence and resilience and their understanding of other cultures. These include trips to museums, performing with the choir and visits to different places of worship.

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

The school's well-designed curriculum builds on what pupils know and can do from the early years to Year 6. It meets the needs of all pupils well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Curriculum plans are carefully ordered so that pupils can make connections between subjects. This helps pupils to apply what they know when they are learning something new.

High-quality training has enhanced teachers' subject knowledge. They are well equipped to deliver the curriculum effectively. Leaders and staff share ideas and expertise, including with colleagues in other schools. Teachers use assessment information well. This helps them to plan what pupils need to learn next and to identify those who are struggling. The special educational needs coordinator supports teachers to be able to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. This helps teachers to adapt their plans so that pupils with SEND can access all aspects of the curriculum.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the disruption to pupils' education meant that the curriculum content in some subjects was not delivered. This has led to gaps in the knowledge pupils have in some subjects. Leaders have identified the key knowledge that was not taught. The key content that pupils need to know has been carefully woven into the curriculum plans for this academic year. However, leaders are at the early stages of checking that the revised curriculum plans are being delivered effectively and that pupils are catching up.

The development of language and communication has a high priority across the school. Staff use every opportunity to broaden pupils' vocabulary, particularly in the early years. Leaders foster a love of reading for all pupils. The school library is at the heart of the school. In the early years, children enjoy listening to stories and joining in with rhymes. Older pupils talk eloquently about their favourite authors. They frequently recommend books to others. Pupils read widely and often across a range of subjects.

Children begin to learn phonics as soon as they start school. In the early years, they practise their phonics knowledge across a range of activities, both indoors and outside. Pupils in Year 1 apply their phonics knowledge accurately when reading unfamiliar words. The books that pupils read match the sounds that they know. This helps most pupils to become confident, fluent readers by the end of Year 2. Skilled staff help pupils who are struggling, including those pupils at the early stages of reading in key stage 2. Pupils benefit from the extra support that they receive.

In the early years, skilled staff help to develop children's confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Children settle quickly into well-established routines. Pupils across the school are polite and well-mannered. There is very little disruption in lessons. This helps pupils to focus on their learning. Pupils are proud of their achievements. They talked confidently about things that they have previously learned.

The curriculum is enhanced further through a wide range of opportunities. Pupils recall trips to places of interest and feeding the animals at the zoo. They understand the importance of tolerance and respect for the views of others. Older pupils can explain the importance of democracy and the role of Parliament following a visit from the local Member of Parliament. Pupils are ambitious for their future. For example, many want to run their own business or work on the space programme.

Governors know the school well. They are proud of the role the school has in the community. Governors use their knowledge effectively to hold leaders to account for all aspects of the school's work, including the quality of education. Governors are mindful of staff's workload and well-being. Staff feel valued and supported by leaders. Parents and carers speak very highly of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate, up-to-date training. This helps them to quickly recognise any signs of anxiety or changes in a pupil's demeanour. Staff understand what to do if they have any concerns about pupils' safety or well-being. Leaders engage effectively with other agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive any additional help that they may need.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They learn how to behave in a safe way when they are out in the community and when using

mobile devices to talk with their friends. Pupils told inspectors that there is always an adult in school that they can talk with if they have any concerns or worries. Leaders provide guidance for parents to ensure that pupils use the internet safely when they are not in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have identified the subject content that was not taught during the COVID-19 pandemic and made suitable adaptations to curriculum planning. However, leaders are not sure if the amended plans are making a difference to pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that they check that teachers are following the updated curriculum plans so that pupils can make up for lost ground across different subject areas.

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.

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	119384
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10204457
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Richard Sharples
Headteacher	Mrs Joanne Owen
Website	www.bank-st-stephens.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 and 21 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school had its most recent section 48 inspection, undertaken by the Diocese of Liverpool, in January 2016. The next section 48 inspection is due during the 2021/22 academic year.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2019.
- A new chair of governors was appointed in September 2021.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors spoke with four representatives from the governing body, the headteacher, members of the leadership team and staff. They also had a

telephone conversation with a representative from the Diocese of Liverpool and met with two representatives from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and science. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke to staff. They also spoke to pupils about their learning and their experiences of the school. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders and pupils about art and design and music.
- Inspectors considered 15 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire and nine free-text comments. They also met with 25 parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors considered the 18 responses to the staff survey and the 15 responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to safeguarding and spoke with pupils and staff. They also reviewed documents relating to governance.

Inspection team

Amanda Stringer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Amanda Dodd

Ofsted Inspector

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