

Inspection of St Gabriel's RC High School, a Voluntary Academy

Bridge Road, Bury, Lancashire BL9 0TZ

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils feel happy and safe at this school. They told inspectors that it is a welcoming place where it is easy to make friends. Pupils have trusting relationships with staff and are confident that their concerns will be taken seriously. Incidents of bullying are dealt with well by leaders.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have prioritised curriculum development to ensure that pupils access a well-designed curriculum. As a result, pupils achieve highly.

Leaders have raised their expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are expected to engage with leaders' core values of strength, service and success. The majority of pupils meet leaders' high expectations. They behave well and typically work hard.

Leaders provide a range of extra-curricular opportunities, which pupils enjoy. These include taking part in the school musical, sporting activities and learning British sign language. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to the wider school community. For example, pupils take on roles such as mental health representatives, and some older pupils act as peer mentors to younger pupils.

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

Leaders have made considerable improvements to the quality of education that pupils receive. For example, they offer a broad range of subjects, which has led to a greater proportion of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects than was previously the case. Pupils achieve well.

Leaders have supported subject leaders to strengthen their understanding of curriculum design. This has been successful. Subject leaders have thought carefully about how to organise their curriculums so that pupils' learning builds over time. Subject leaders have identified the key knowledge that pupils should know in each topic.

Staff have access to high-quality training opportunities that align with leaders' priorities. Teachers are experts in their subjects. They use their knowledge to explain new concepts clearly to pupils. Leaders have ensured that teachers regularly check what pupils know and can remember. Teachers use these assessment strategies effectively to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. This helps pupils to build their knowledge securely over time.

Leaders have robust systems in place to swiftly identify pupils with SEND. Leaders have ensured that staff have ambitious expectations of what these pupils should achieve. Teachers have been trained well to support pupils with SEND. Teaching assistants are knowledgeable about the curriculum in the subjects they support.

They ably assist teachers to appropriately adapt the delivery of the curriculum. This helps pupils with SEND to learn well.

Leaders have started to prioritise reading across the school. They have focused on reading across the wider curriculum. For example, teachers provide structured reading opportunities where pupils engage with texts that are relevant to the subject. Leaders are developing a programme to support pupils who find reading more difficult. Currently, this programme focuses on pupils in key stage 3. This means that leaders do not routinely check how well pupils in key stage 4 can read. As a result, a small number of older pupils do not get timely support to improve their reading knowledge. This hinders their access to the wider curriculum.

Leaders have implemented systems that have considerably improved pupils' behaviour. The atmosphere in the school is calm, including during lessons and at breaktimes. Most pupils are attentive to their teachers.

Leaders have a sharp focus on improving the attendance of pupils. Leaders have deployed a range of strategies, which is beginning to have a positive impact. Nevertheless, some groups of pupils still do not attend school as often as they should. As a result, they miss important learning.

Pupils experience a comprehensive programme that supports their personal development. They learn relevant and age-appropriate content, such as the features of healthy relationships and human rights. Pupils remember this learning well. They have access to an appropriate careers programme, which ensures that they are well informed regarding their next steps.

Trustees are committed to working with leaders to continue to improve the quality of education on offer. Trustees have a clear understanding of leaders' ongoing priorities and ensure that they are held to account over these. Leaders consult staff when implementing new initiatives. Leaders have taken steps to reduce staff's workload. Most staff appreciate these actions and enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have strengthened the safeguarding systems within the school, including improving the physical security of the school site. Leaders have ensured that all staff receive appropriate training and that they are knowledgeable about their safeguarding responsibilities.

Leaders have processes in place for recording concerns about pupils' welfare. Staff use these systems appropriately and diligently. Leaders make timely referrals to external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive the support they need.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum. They talk confidently about this learning, including how to behave safely when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' approach to identifying and supporting pupils who are struggling to read is underdeveloped, particularly in key stage 4. Consequently, some older pupils do not receive the help they need in a timely and effective way. This hinders their learning of the curriculum and prevents them from achieving as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that appropriate support is in place for these pupils so that they learn to read accurately and fluently.
- Some groups of pupils do not attend school as often as they should. Therefore, these pupils do not fully access the curriculum, and they do not experience all that the school has to offer. Leaders should take effective action to improve the attendance of these pupils.

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](#)' 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	148049
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10266109
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1051
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Catherine Marie Garside
Headteacher	Lisa Corrigan
Website	www.stgabrielshigh.stoccat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Gabriel's RC High School, a voluntary academy, converted to become an academy school in November 2020. When its predecessor school, St Gabriel's RC High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- This school is part of the St Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Academy Trust.
- This is a Roman Catholic school in the Diocese of Salford. The most recent section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character took place in October 2016.
- Leaders use four registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives of both the trust and the governing body. An inspector also spoke to a representative of the Diocese of Salford.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, geography, modern foreign languages and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including the school's single central record. The inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to check on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the school.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation documents, minutes of trust board meetings and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

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