

Inspection of St Ambrose Barlow RC High School

37 Ash Drive, Wardley, Swinton, Manchester M27 9QP

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming school. Pupils said that they feel safe. Most pupils explained that they feel happy at school. They said that staff care about them. Pupils told inspectors that there is a strong sense of belonging at St Ambrose Barlow RC High School.

All pupils said that behaviour has improved. Most pupils are confident that staff will challenge any discriminatory language and deal with bullying quickly and effectively. However, a few pupils felt that some pupils get away with unkind behaviour. They said that name-calling, and disrespectful comments, were still sometimes used by pupils. Leaders are aware of this and are determined to make sure that their new relationships and behaviour policy makes a difference for all pupils in the school.

Pupils appreciate the opportunity to study a wide range of subjects. They also enjoy the extra-curricular activities provided by staff. Older pupils feel well supported when making decisions about their next steps in education, employment or training.

Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. These aspirations are reflected in the ambitious subject curriculums available for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, these curriculums are not delivered as well as they could be. This prevents pupils from achieving as well as they should.

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

Senior leaders and governors have taken care to design a well-planned curriculum that aims to meet the needs of all pupils, including those pupils who are disadvantaged and those pupils with SEND, at St Ambrose Barlow RC High School. They have thought carefully about the structure of the curriculum and they have ensured that it is broad, balanced and commensurate with the national curriculum. Leaders are well on their way to transforming the curriculum offer for pupils.

Senior leaders have ensured that most subject leaders have considered carefully what they want pupils to learn. They have also thought about the order in which new knowledge should be taught. However, some subject leaders do not ensure that the curriculum content they have planned is delivered effectively and consistently by all teachers. This hinders pupils' learning.

Leaders have appropriate assessment systems in place. However, teachers do not use assessment systems effectively enough to check that pupils' knowledge is secure before they move on to new learning. This means that pupils do not always know and remember what they have been taught. As a result, some pupils have misconceptions in their learning. They do not achieve as well as they should.

Leaders have ensured that the systems used to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND are increasingly effective. As a result, teachers now have access to appropriate information that helps them better meet pupils' needs. However, not all teachers have had sufficient training to use this information to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. This means that some pupils with SEND do not receive the support that they need to access the curriculum as well as they could.

Leaders have prioritised reading across the school. Pupils' reading ability is accurately assessed. Leaders have a sharp focus on addressing the gaps in pupils' reading skills. A growing team of well-trained staff have started to deliver appropriate support for those pupils who are behind in their reading. However, this work is in its early stages. As a result, not all pupils who struggle with reading have benefited from this support to catch up quickly.

Pupils know that staff expect them to behave well. Leaders have ensured that clear systems are in place to help teachers manage behaviour in lessons. However, some pupils struggle to manage their behaviour, particularly during social times.

Leaders successfully prioritise pupils' wider development. Through the personal, social, health and economic curriculum, pupils benefit from well-planned experiences that prepare them for life beyond school. Pupils learn about the importance of being inclusive and respecting difference. There is a comprehensive, well-thought-out programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance. Pupils were very positive about the help that they receive to make informed decisions about their next steps post-16. As a result, most pupils successfully enter education, employment or training after school.

Most staff feel that leaders are considerate of their well-being. A minority of staff expressed concerns about their high workload. Leaders acknowledged this and are taking steps to reduce staff workload further.

The governing body has been restructured and it has the skills and capacity to challenge and support school leaders to improve the quality of education further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have been proactive in improving the culture of safeguarding at the school. They have raised the profile of safeguarding by introducing weekly briefings to discuss relevant contextual concerns about pupils. All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. They are confident using leaders' new systems to identify and report concerns regarding pupils at risk of harm.

Leaders have acted appropriately to address the minor weaknesses in safeguarding systems and structures. This includes the strengthening of pastoral systems, the designation of a link governor for safeguarding and more effective communication with outside agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not use the information that they receive about pupils with SEND to adapt the delivery of the curriculum as effectively as they should. This means that some pupils with SEND do not achieve as highly as they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff are suitably trained to use the information that they have to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND.
- Not all teachers are using leaders' assessment systems to check how well pupils are learning the content of the curriculum. Consequently, there are times when pupils have misconceptions in their learning, or they have not retained the essential knowledge that they need. This hinders pupils from achieving as highly as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers are well trained to use assessment strategies effectively to address misconceptions or gaps in pupils' learning.
- There is variability in how well subject leaders check on the effectiveness of the curriculum delivery in all subjects. This means that the curriculum is not yet implemented as effectively as it should be. As a result, some pupils do not know and remember as much of the essential knowledge that they should over time. Leaders should ensure that all subject leaders check how effectively the curriculum is implemented in all subjects.
- During social times, some pupils are not as respectful as they should be to staff or to their peers. This means that some pupils engage in antisocial behaviour. This affects how well other pupils enjoy their break and lunchtimes. Leaders should continue to develop and embed the new behaviour policy to ensure that pupils are able to regulate and take responsibility for their own behaviour.

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	105989
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10216068
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1053
Appropriate authority	Salford
Chair of governing body	Vikki Allen
Headteacher	Ben Davis
Website	www.stambrosebarlowswinton.org
Date of previous inspection	24 March 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a new chair of governors and several new governors to the governing body.
- The school makes use of four registered alternative providers for small numbers of pupils.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provider for three pupils.
- This is a Catholic school. The last inspection under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 took place on 1 March 2019.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and a range of staff. The lead inspector spoke with three representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors spoke on the telephone with representatives of the local authority.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, art and design and languages. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils and teachers.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from a range of year groups. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour and spoke to pupils at social times.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, self-evaluation documents, external quality assurance documents and attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors checked on the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the recruitment checks made on staff. Inspectors met with leaders, staff, pupils and governors to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding in school. An inspector checked the arrangements for those pupils who attend alternative provision.

Inspection team

Amanda Downing, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Holmes	Ofsted Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Rachel Goodwin	Her Majesty's Inspector

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