

St Mark's CofE Primary School

Aviary Road, Walkden, Worsley, Manchester M28 2WF

Inspection dates

29–30 January 2019

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The dedicated headteacher and deputy headteacher have maintained a good quality of education for pupils.
- Children get off to a good start and make good progress in the early years. Adults provide stimulating activities that engage and interest children. Children develop a strong interest in books and stories. However, the opportunities for children to develop their mark-making and writing are limited.
- Phonics is taught effectively. Younger pupils read and pronounce sounds and write the letters that these sounds represent with confidence.
- The quality of teaching is good. Staff are keen to engage pupils in activities that capture their imaginations. However, occasionally activities in subjects beyond English and mathematics do not provide the right levels of challenge for the range of pupils' abilities.
- By the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is much higher than the national average. In 2018, the proportion of those reaching greater depth in writing increased and was slightly above the national average.
- Several subject leaders are at an early stage of developing a thorough understanding of the progress that pupils make over time. Systems are not embedded for subject leaders to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their areas of responsibility.
- A new curriculum is in place, and pupils enjoy learning about history and geography through topic work. However, although pupils learn about cultures which may be different from their own, their knowledge and understanding lack depth.
- Pupils behave well and clearly enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in above-average attendance. The vast majority of parents and carers would recommend this school.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They and leaders are committed to continually improving all aspects of this school community.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - subject leaders have a clearer grasp of how to build pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects beyond English and mathematics
 - subject leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their areas of responsibility
 - pupils deepen their understanding of faiths and cultures that may be different from their own.
- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers routinely plan activities that provide challenge for all ability groups, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Improve the provision in early years by providing children with more opportunities for mark-making and writing both in the classroom and outdoors.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads the school with strength, vision and compassion. He is ably supported by the equally dedicated deputy headteacher. The school's mission statement of 'a family working and growing together to reach our potential' is fully embraced by all staff, governors, pupils, parents and volunteers.
- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders and governors have shown a steely determination to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment of writing. Senior leaders have introduced a new whole-school approach to the teaching of writing. They provide high-quality training and support for teachers and teaching assistants. The approach teachers use to develop pupils' writing has had a positive impact on the quality of writing, both in English and across the wider curriculum. As a result, pupils' writing across the school has improved.
- Subject leaders are specialists in their areas of responsibility. They provide training for teachers to enable them to plan activities across the wider curriculum. Although subject leaders have adopted approaches to monitor their areas of responsibility, there is no whole-school approach to checking that pupils are building appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills as they move through the school. Neither is there a whole-school approach for subject leaders to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Too much responsibility lies with the senior leadership team.
- Leaders use the additional funding for the relatively small number of disadvantaged pupils carefully. This contributes significantly to the good progress that these pupils make during their time in school.
- The coordinator for special educational needs works well to ensure that the additional support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is precisely matched to their needs. Leaders check the progress of these pupils very carefully and ensure that they are challenged to achieve well.
- Pupils do well in sport and develop new skills. This is because leaders use the physical education and sports premium funding carefully to improve teaching. Pupils' sporting achievements are impressive in, for example, cross-country running.
- The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to broaden their knowledge and experience beyond English and mathematics. Pupils particularly enjoy projects and topic work which integrate subjects such as geography and science. However, some subjects are not as well developed as others.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is a real strength. Mutual respect among everyone engaged with this school community is palpable. However, pupils' knowledge and experiences of different cultures, backgrounds and ethnicities found in Britain today are limited. Although leaders have planned a religious education curriculum that includes a number of world religions, pupils' understanding of these is cursory. Despite this, pupils learn that everyone deserves to be valued and have equality of opportunity. Pupils have an age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of how equality applies to people of different genders, ethnicities, sexualities and disabilities.

Governance of the school

- The governing body and school leaders work very closely to ensure that the school continues to improve. Through their unified and uncompromising leadership, they have established an inclusive school where all pupils are valued and encouraged to thrive.
- The members of the governing body are dedicated, committed and knowledgeable. They have a wide range of skills and update their training regularly. Members of the governing body have a secure knowledge of the strengths of the school and areas for further development. They are keen to build on the progress made in improving outcomes in writing.
- Governors provide the right balance of challenge and support for leaders. They make frequent checks and visits to ensure that improvements to the school are realised and sustained. They also check that leaders use additional funding effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The systems in place to check that adults in school are safe to work with children are secure. These are checked regularly by leaders and the governing body.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' safety is a priority and that staff are vigilant. They make sure that staff receive appropriate training to identify any signs of possible danger or potential abuse. Leaders have created a culture in which pupils feel safe and know that they have someone to talk to if they are worried. Staff nurture vulnerable pupils and work with them and their families to address areas of concern. Pupils value the support that they receive.
- The procedures for reporting any incidents or concerns are applied effectively. Staff intervene, for example, to provide families with support when pupils are frequently absent. Leaders ensure that pupils' attendance is carefully tracked. The school works closely with parents and external agencies to make sure that pupils are safe.
- Staff give pupils plenty of opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe. For example, during the inspection, pupils were learning about keeping safe when near dogs. Pupils are confident about how to keep themselves safe online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Staff have high expectations for pupils' learning in English and mathematics. Staff and pupils have a shared understanding of what successful learning looks like. Across the school, pupils are cooperative and resilient, and lessons are a hive of activity.
- Teachers plan engaging hooks to learning, which capture pupils' interest and imagination. For example, Year 3 pupils were developing their understanding of the Stone Age through a workshop provided by an external company. They were able to tell inspectors what spears would have been made of and what they were used for. This workshop had ignited pupils' imaginations.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use subject-specific language precisely so that pupils develop their learning in different areas of the curriculum. Staff question pupils skilfully

and ask them to explain their thinking. Teachers encourage pupils to have a go and to tackle tricky problems. As a result, pupils are confident learners and persevere in their work.

- Staff have been successful in raising the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level in phonics by the end of Year 1. Pupils learn to read with fluency and understanding. Across the school, staff promote pupils' love of reading well. Reading areas in classrooms are bright and attractive, and staff give pupils plenty of opportunities to read for pleasure.
- Teachers plan writing activities which develop pupils' skills and competency well across the curriculum. Pupils write for a range of different purposes and apply their skills in grammar, spelling and punctuation to good effect. Pupils quickly develop fluency in their handwriting, and their work is well presented and neat.
- In mathematics, pupils have a good understanding of number, and their written calculations are accurate. Teachers effectively develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills, both in mathematics lessons and across the curriculum. Pupils work well together to tackle challenging tasks and to explain their thinking. Teachers quickly address misconceptions and make sure that pupils are secure in their knowledge. As a result, standards reached by pupils in mathematics are high.
- Teachers plan work very precisely for pupils with SEND. Staff work together closely to ensure that this group of pupils very quickly receive additional support when needed. Both teachers and teaching assistants provide tailored support which accelerates pupils' progress.
- Teachers use information from regular assessments to improve their planning and teaching. However, in some subjects beyond English and mathematics, teachers' planning is not precise enough to meet the full range of pupils' abilities. As a result, pupils do not develop a depth of knowledge. Senior leaders are not fully alert to this, since some subject leaders do not have a systematic approach to checking the quality of teaching and learning or the accuracy of teachers' assessments in their areas of responsibility.
- The learning environment across the school is vibrant and engaging. Walls are adorned with pupils' attractive art work. Displays throughout the school are used to support pupils' learning as well as celebrate their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders place great emphasis on supporting pupils, particularly the most vulnerable. A high priority is given to pupils with concerns or mental health issues. Staff are responsive to any anxieties that pupils may have. For example, during the inspection, Year 1 had the benefit of a visitor to the school to explain how to keep themselves safe when near dogs. This was a direct response to a parental concern over their child's fear of dogs.
- Leaders make sure that pupils lead healthy lives in school. Pupils are encouraged to attend sports clubs and increase their physical activity. Pupils enjoy a wide range of

sporting opportunities, including netball, football and tag rugby. They develop their skills across a range of sports. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their recent successes in inter-school sporting competitions, including football, hockey and dodgeball.

- Pupils have a good understanding of British values and how these apply to their lives. The school's curriculum has not fully developed pupils' understanding of other cultures and religions. However, across subjects, there are examples of pupils learning about people with different genders, ethnicities, sexualities or disabilities. During a Year 2 lesson, pupils showed a very good grasp of the wide range of family units.
- Pupils are given opportunities to develop their independence. Residential trips in Year 6 encourage older pupils to take part in team-building activities and to enjoy new experiences such as rafting and climbing. This helps to develop pupils' confidence and prepare them well for their next stage of education.
- Eco monitors, school councillors and members of the ethos group develop their leadership skills and responsibility towards others. For example, pupils have worked with a community group to raise funds to eliminate polio across the globe. They take the welfare of others less fortunate than themselves to their hearts.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, welcoming and respectful to others.
- Pupils report that bullying is very rare indeed. Staff teach pupils how to recognise bullying behaviour, and pupils are confident that staff listen to them if they have any concerns. Pupils are very confident in explaining their understanding of cyber bullying and why it is dangerous to make friends through social media.
- Pupils are proud to attend St Mark's CofE Primary School. They are confident and self-assured and value their time in school. In classes, the vast majority of pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners. They have a very clear understanding of how to be a successful learner and use this knowledge to persevere and succeed.
- Around school, pupils are calm and show consideration for others. They play well together at breaktimes and show support for each other in class. Year 6 pupils are all 'senior students' and exemplary role models for younger pupils.
- Staff are working with the very few pupils who are still learning to choose appropriate behaviours. A very small minority of parents raised concerns around inappropriate behaviour. The inspectors were satisfied with the school's systems for thoroughly recording and taking appropriate action when, occasionally, inappropriate behaviours occur.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their consistently above-average rates of attendance. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is below average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment in phonics is usually higher than the national average by the end of Year 1. Pupils quickly acquire early reading skills and use their knowledge of phonics in

their writing. Staff plan additional support for those pupils working below the expected standard to make sure that they make good progress.

- By the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels is consistently higher than the national average for reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics is in line with the national average. This year's assessment information shows that the proportion working at greater depth is increasing. Work in current pupils' books confirms that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1.
- In the last two years, the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics has been significantly higher than the national average. This is replicated in reading and mathematics at the higher standards. In 2018, the proportion reaching greater depth in writing improved to slightly higher than the national average. Pupils' workbooks and leaders' assessment data show that this improvement in writing is continuing.
- Subjects beyond English and mathematics are taught through a combination of topic work and discrete lessons. Teachers ensure that pupils are making generally good progress across the wider curriculum. However, pupils lack depth in their knowledge and understanding, particularly of the range of faiths and cultures that are different from their own.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points. This is because staff plan work carefully to meet the individual needs of these pupils. Staff work closely with outside professionals such as speech therapists to help pupils overcome any barriers to learning.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in each year group is relatively small. Senior leaders closely monitor individuals to ensure that they make the same good progress as their peers. Teachers give disadvantaged pupils appropriate, well-planned additional support if required. This contributes significantly to the good progress that this group of pupils is now making.
- The very small minority who speak English as an additional language are very well supported in school. Leaders instigate bespoke support for those pupils who do not speak English at home.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children join the early years with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. As a result of engaging and well-planned learning opportunities, children make good progress through the Nursery and Reception classes. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is above average over time. Children leave the early years well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.
- Children in the early years behave well. They are cooperative and enthusiastic learners, playing happily with sustained concentration. This is because staff plan activities that hold their interest and challenge their thinking.
- The early years classroom is bright, engaging and fun for children. During the inspection, children were playing happily in the school role-play area, taking the

register. Others were answering the telephone and taking messages. Through such opportunities, children develop their early reading and writing skills. Occasionally, there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills.

- Staff teach phonics well. Children quickly develop a love of books and begin to use their phonics skills to work out unfamiliar words. During the inspection, captivating storytelling at the end of the school day had the children mesmerised. Plenty of books are used well to support children's learning.
- Teachers plan effective, additional support for children with SEND. Through work with parents and other professionals, leaders make sure that this group of children get the early support that they need to make good progress in their learning.
- The early years leader works well with colleagues from other schools. For example, she attends assessment moderations to ensure that her measures of children's progress are accurate. Staff in the early years keep their skills and knowledge up to date through regular training.
- Leaders work hard to develop communication and joint working with parents. This helps children to settle quickly into routines when they first start school. Staff develop parents' confidence in identifying learning at home and recording this in their children's learning journals.
- The learning environments across the early years are safe and secure. Children collect and use equipment safely and move calmly around the classrooms. The opportunity for Nursery and Reception children to play in the snow during the inspection was used well. Staff ensured that pupils were well wrapped up in warm clothes and wellingtons before embarking on making snowmen. Teaching assistants made the most of the opportunity to develop children's language skills by asking pertinent questions and encouraging children to describe how they were making the snowmen. Children made good progress in their physical development and speech.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 105949 |
| Local authority | Salford |
| Inspection number | 10057960 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 433 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | William Macdonald |
| Headteacher | Damian Kay |
| Telephone number | 0161 790 3423 |
| Website | stmarksce.co.uk |
| Email address | stmarks.ceprimaryschool@salford.gov.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 25–26 September 2013 |

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is lower than the national average.
- The school operates after-school clubs for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Several sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector had telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and a representative from the diocese.
- The inspectors held meetings with several groups of pupils from key stage 2 and talked with pupils in classes and around the school.
- The inspectors listened to a small number of pupils from Years 2 and 5 read.
- A range of pupils' books and tracking records were scrutinised with one of the school's leaders of English.
- The inspectors spoke with a number of parents to seek their views. The 174 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were analysed along with 90 free-text responses from parents. The inspectors analysed the 17 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and the 93 responses from pupils to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- The inspectors scrutinised a variety of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, records of governing body meetings and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. A range of documentation regarding safeguarding was also scrutinised.

Inspection team

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Naomi Taylor, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Gaynor Rennie | Ofsted Inspector |
| John Daley | Ofsted Inspector |

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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