

Inspection of St Mark's RC Primary School

Queensway, Clifton, Swinton, Manchester M27 8QE

Inspection dates: 5–6 November 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

St Mark's is a happy school where pupils feel safe and enjoy learning. Pupils make strong progress and achieve well, particularly in reading and mathematics. Pupils develop a great enthusiasm for learning. They told us that English lessons fire their imagination, and that art lessons inspire their creativity.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities that they have to be active. Many pupils enjoy the challenge of completing the 'daily mile' on the track around the school field. Older pupils often lead the 'morning move it' exercise sessions. Pupils also enjoy competing in sporting competitions in athletics, rugby and football. Last year, all of the pupils who left Year 6 were able to swim at least 25 metres.

Pupils respect each other and have a strong sense of moral purpose. They value the friendships that they develop and know that it is important to be kind to one another. Pupils in Year 6 enjoy extra responsibilities. These can include being a librarian, a play leader or a member of the pupil chaplaincy team. Pupils told us that they feel well supported by adults. They also said that bullying and bad behaviour rarely happen and that, when they do, they are sorted out quickly.

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

The teaching of reading is a particular strength. In the early years phonics is taught well. Reading books are chosen carefully so children can practise the letters and sounds that they learn in class. As they move into key stage 1, pupils quickly gain the knowledge and skills that they need to become competent and successful readers. Those who struggle with early reading are given effective support and do not get left behind. Older pupils are introduced to a range of different authors and are encouraged to develop a love of reading. Pupils make strong progress across key stage 2 and achieve well in reading at the end of Year 6. Many older pupils read widely and often.

Leaders have ensured that there is a high-quality curriculum in place to support teaching and learning in mathematics. Teachers understand what pupils need to know and when they need to know it. They plan lessons that build effectively on what pupils already know and can do. Pupils are challenged well in mathematics. The strong progress that pupils make means that they achieve extremely well in this subject by the end of key stage 2.

In key stage 1 and key stage 2, pupils study the full range of national curriculum subjects. However, leaders recognise the need for improvement in some areas. For example, the plans for geography identify when different topics should be taught. However, these plans do not focus closely enough on the geographical knowledge and skills that pupils need to develop. As a result, the work that teachers set does not take account of pupils' previous learning as well as it should.

Leaders have made changes to the teaching of science. The science curriculum now focuses more closely on arranging pupils' learning so that it builds on what they have learned previously. This is already having a positive impact on pupils' progress in this subject. There are also improvements to pupils' learning in history, following a review of how this area of the curriculum is taught. However, leaders have not yet reviewed the impact of these changes and this means that progress across classes is not consistent.

Staff provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils participate in all aspects of school life. Leaders work well with parents and outside agencies, where necessary, to ensure that pupils' needs are met. Leaders ensure that these pupils benefit from effective teaching and support.

The early years is a hive of activity. Staff plan learning carefully to meet children's needs. They ensure that there is a range of activities available each day. These challenge children and stimulate their imaginations. Children quickly learn the school routines. They cooperate and share resources well with each other. They are also respectful and tolerant towards children in their class who sometimes find learning difficult.

Staff morale is high at St Mark's. Members of staff who we met said they enjoy their work and are proud to be associated with the school. They also said that they feel extremely well supported by senior leaders.

Governors understand their roles and responsibilities. They know the school's strengths and the areas that need improving. Governors provide good support and challenge to school leaders. They ensure that resources are managed well and that leaders are held to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school is a safe and secure place for pupils. Leaders ensure that detailed checks are made on all adults who work at the school. Staff are well trained in safeguarding matters and know the school's systems for helping pupils who may be at risk. Leaders and staff know the school community extremely well and have developed an excellent working relationship with parents. Leaders also work well with other professionals to ensure that effective support is provided for pupils and families who might need it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have been successful in improving the science and history curriculum. They have done this by identifying key points by which pupils are expected to

have acquired specific subject knowledge and skills. Leaders now need to ensure that other subjects are sequenced as well, so that pupils' learning builds on what they already know. The transition arrangements were used on this inspection to confirm that pupils benefit from a good quality of education.

- Leaders have good systems in place to review the impact of teaching on the quality of pupils' learning in English and mathematics. They now need to ensure that they make regular checks on all subjects in the wider curriculum.

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're 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	105956
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10110868
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	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Francine Walsh
Headteacher	Patricia Garner
Website	www.st-marks-clifton.salford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 November 2006

Information about this school

- Several members of staff have been appointed to their posts since the previous inspection, including the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- A new chair of the governing body has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- In May 2018, the school was inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the quality of religious education and the Catholic nature of the school.
- The school provides breakfast and after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- During this inspection we met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. We also met with a representative from the local authority.
- We met with several members of the leadership team, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher, subject leaders and the teacher who coordinates

support for pupils with SEND.

- During this inspection the following subjects were considered in depth: reading, mathematics, science and history. Our inspection activity included: an evaluation of medium-term curriculum planning; visits to lessons with leaders; scrutiny of pupils' work; listening to pupils read; discussions with subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants and discussions with pupils about their learning.
- We looked at the school's improvement planning.
- We looked at the quality of provision in the early years and an inspector met with the early years leader to discuss children's progress.
- We looked at safeguarding records and the checks that leaders make on staff prior to them starting at the school. We checked pupils' attendance and teachers' training records. We also discussed safeguarding and behaviour when meeting with pupils, teachers and other members of staff.
- We observed pupils' behaviour during playtimes, dinnertimes and during lessons. We spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying.
- We took account of the 29 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Rigby

Ofsted Inspector

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