

Inspection of a good school: St Dunstan's RC Primary School

Bacup Street, Moston, Manchester M40 9HF

Inspection dates:

10–11 March 2020

Outcome

St Dunstan's RC Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this vibrant and culturally diverse school. They like finding out new things and socialising with their friends. Parents and carers appreciate the warm and caring atmosphere of the school.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. They said that on the rare occasions that bullying happens, staff deal with it immediately. Pupils are curious, cooperative and well-behaved. They enjoy learning. They say that teachers and teaching assistants make lessons interesting. Pupils try their hardest and take pride in their work.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. This supports pupils' strong achievement in a wide range of subjects. Pupils raise funds for many worthy causes, including local and international charities. They demonstrate their strong leadership skills, for example as school council members.

Pupils love sports and physical activities, such as swimming, basketball, football, boxing and cross-country. They enjoy attending tennis, skateboarding and robotics clubs.

Pupils regularly visit museums, libraries, the theatre and local places of interest. These experiences bring learning to life. Pupils are keen musicians. They like to play percussion instruments, such as the steel pans, and the ukulele.

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

Senior leaders and governors have designed a curriculum with Christian values at its core. Leaders want pupils to be caring and productive members of the local community. They also want pupils to have the knowledge and skills that they need for the next stage of their learning.

The school's well-planned curriculum helps to ensure that teachers know what pupils need to learn and in what order. As a result, over time, pupils know and remember more in

most subjects. For example, the careful sequencing of the curriculum in design and technology helps to ensure that pupils remember much of their prior learning. The pupils that I spoke with were proud to tell me how they created paper structures, strong enough to contain heavy objects such as stones. Others explained to me in detail how buildings are constructed to withstand earthquakes.

In a small number of subjects, leaders' work to help pupils know and remember more about their prior learning is still developing. For example, in geography, some of the pupils are not confident in their recall of the names of rivers and mountain ranges in the United Kingdom. The same is true for some pupils' ability to locate major English cities, such as Manchester, on a map. Work to develop pupils' understanding in this subject is not as effective as in others.

Published data shows that in 2019, Year 6 pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics was not as good as in previous years. Their achievement in reading was particularly low. Pupils achieved highly in key stage 1 in all subjects. The proportion of pupils that attained the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check also dipped to below the national average.

This year, leaders' initiatives to improve phonics and reading are reaping rewards. Pupils read with good expression. Those who find reading difficult use their phonics skills well to sound out and read unfamiliar words. However, across key stage 2, pupils' progress in reading is not quite as strong as it could be. Some pupils do not read widely enough and have a limited appreciation of the work of different authors and poets.

Pupils with SEND make the same gains in their learning as other pupils because the curriculum is tailored to meet their specific needs. Teaching assistants are trained well to support pupils with moderate learning difficulties, and speech, language and communication difficulties.

Children in the early years start to learn phonics in the Nursery. They are creative and enjoy exploring the world around them. Staff have high expectations of children, with whom they have strong bonds. Staff help children to develop their counting and writing skills. They also make learning fun. This was evident as children listened to a story about a tyrannosaurus rex. Children enjoyed handling different objects from the story. They used their imagination to make dinosaur sounds, and their phonics skills to sound out words such as 'skeleton'.

Pupils behave well in class and around the school. Leaders have worked successfully to enhance pupils' personal development. Pupils carry out various roles, such as reading buddies. Older pupils demonstrate that they are responsible and mature by taking care of their younger peers during breaktimes.

Staff feel valued. Those I spoke with told me that leaders are mindful of their workload, well-being and mental health. Newly qualified teachers said that the mentoring support that they receive helps to improve their teaching practice.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors responsible for safeguarding are trained well. They are highly vigilant when it comes to pupils' welfare. The school has effective systems in place for passing on and recording safeguarding concerns.

Staff are alert to any possible signs of neglect or abuse and know exactly what to do if they are worried about a pupil. Leaders make careful checks on all adults who work in the school to make sure that none pose a threat to pupils. Teachers help pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Senior leaders and governors have ensured that in most subjects, the curriculum carefully maps out what pupils need to learn and by when. Leaders know where the curriculum is strongest and have a clear understanding of which subjects require more work. For example, they know that the geography curriculum is not as effective as it should be. As a result, some pupils do not retain the information that they have previously learned. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is carefully sequenced and check that teachers are delivering this curriculum effectively. This will ensure that pupils know more and remember more.
- Pupils' progress in reading by the end of key stage 2 is not as strong as it is in writing and mathematics. Some pupils in key stage 2 do not develop a love of reading. They do not read regularly enough and have limited experience of different types of books. Leaders should ensure that staff promote reading more effectively. They also need to ensure that the reading curriculum introduces older pupils to a wider range of different authors, poets and book genres.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged St Dunstan's Roman Catholic Primary School to be good on 22–23 March 2016.

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 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	105526
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10122079
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	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Monica Strothers
Headteacher	Gabrielle Eccles
Website	www.stdunstansmoston.com
Date of previous inspection	22–23 March 2016.

Information about this school

- Many staff have been appointed since the previous inspection, including three newly qualified teachers. The governing body has been reorganised and includes several new members, including the chair of the governing body.
- The outdoor learning and playing areas for children in the early years have been fully remodelled recently.
- St Dunstan's is a Roman Catholic school. Its last section 48 inspection took place in November 2016.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and senior leaders responsible for the curriculum, provision for children in the early years and behaviour and safety. I met with the special educational needs coordinator and staff responsible for safeguarding and pupils' welfare.
- I met with eight governors, including the chair of the governing body. I held a telephone conversation with the school's education consultant.

- I took account of the 11 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also considered responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by 44 members of staff and 31 pupils.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, geography and design and technology. For each subject, I met with the subject leaders and teachers. I visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning. I also listened to pupils read.
- I met with pupils, leaders and staff to talk about pupils' safety, personal development and behaviour. I checked the school's records of the suitability of staff to work with children. I also talked with parents about matters relating to safety and scrutinised the school's safeguarding policy and related documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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