

Inspection of a good school: St Michael's Roman Catholic Primary School, Whitefield

Ribble Drive, Whitefield, Manchester, Lancashire M45 8NJ

Inspection dates:

10–11 March 2020

Outcome

St Michael's Roman Catholic Primary School, Whitefield continues to be a good school.

However, the inspector has some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils enjoy studying the different topics that their teachers plan for them. They work well together. However, some teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils. Some pupils do not progress across the curriculum as well as they should.

Leaders make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have appropriate plans in place to support them. However, not all staff members follow the agreed strategies well enough. Some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders expect high standards of behaviour from pupils. However, some staff do not manage behaviour consistently well. While some pupils are proud to set examples of good behaviour around the school by being chosen as 'value monitors', a minority of pupils do not behave well.

Pupils are safe. The pupils that I spoke with told me that staff deal with incidents of bullying effectively. Pupils access activities provided that help them to remain calm and that support their well-being.

Pupils are polite and helpful. They raise money for charities. Pupils carry out acts of kindness at school and in their local community. They take their roles of looking after each other seriously. They are keen to help their teachers. Older pupils enjoy supporting younger children.

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

Leaders have developed a high-quality and ambitious curriculum. They have been effective at improving pupils' attainment in key stage 1 and key stage 2 over time. The improvement made in the attainment of Year 6 pupils, especially in reading, is impressive.

However, teachers across the school do not deliver the curriculum consistently well. Some teachers tailor curriculum activities to match the needs of the pupils in their class. Others do not. Some teachers do not have a clear understanding of what pupils in their class already know or can do. This prevents pupils from progressing as well as they should across subjects. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations for the work that pupils produce. In these classes, pupils do not learn enough.

The lack of clarity in some teachers' understanding of pupils' needs is especially true for pupils with SEND. There are teachers who ensure that effective support is in place. However, other teachers do not. Like their classmates, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could.

In some classes, teachers allow poor behaviour from a minority of pupils. This interrupts other pupils' learning. This affects some pupils' achievement.

Leaders have ensured that reading is central to the curriculum. Children begin to learn to read as soon as they start school. They quickly develop phonics knowledge. Skilled staff support children to develop secure reading and writing knowledge in the early years. All pupils across the school practise their reading regularly. Pupils who start to fall behind in their reading are helped to catch up.

Pupils love to read. They also love to be read to. Leaders have provided attractive new reading books that match pupils' reading abilities. Teaching staff have developed enticing reading areas around the school. These initiatives have motivated pupils to read more widely.

Published data in 2019 reflects the improving picture of pupils' attainment. In Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading was higher than in most other schools nationally. In mathematics, the number of pupils attaining the highest scores in national tests was also high.

External outcomes also show where further work is needed. The progress that pupils make between key stages 1 and 2 is inconsistent. In writing, in 2019, the progress that Year 6 pupils made from when they were in Year 2 was much lower than it should have been. Attainment of children in the early years has declined over time. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has also declined. That said, the impact of the decisive action that governors and leaders have taken to address this is becoming evident.

There have been considerable changes to systems and procedures to bring about improvements to the curriculum and how well staff manage behaviour. Despite this, staff morale remains high. Most staff members are grateful for the significant support that they

have from leaders to improve their practice. This includes those who are still developing their effectiveness as leaders.

Leaders ensure that pupils have a rich range of experiences to support their personal development, including their physical and mental well-being. Pupils have many opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility for themselves and others. Teachers plan activities making effective use of the local community, including members of St Michael's parish. Pupils learn how they can make a positive contribution to the world around them.

In discussion with the headteacher, I agreed that reading, writing and mathematics may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils are safe. Leaders provide staff and governors with frequent and up-to-date training. Staff follow the school's clear procedures for safeguarding pupils. Leaders liaise with a wide range of agencies to ensure that the pupils who need extra support get the help that they need.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Some older pupils put this into practice by walking or cycling to school safely. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when they are online. They know to keep personal information private. They report any concerns that they have to parents or teachers.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not deliver an ambitious curriculum in their classes equally well across the school. Some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers provide a consistently high quality of education.
- In some classes, teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough. Some teachers accept work from pupils that is not their best. Some pupils' work does not reflect what they are capable of. Teachers need to ensure that pupils in their class achieve as well as they can.
- Staff do not consistently follow the school's behaviour policy. Some pupils' poor behaviour disturbs other pupils from learning. Some staff do not ensure that pupils apply themselves as well as they could to their learning. As a result, the progress that some pupils make between key stages is not good enough. Leaders need to ensure that all staff support pupils to maintain the highest possible levels of behaviour so that pupils achieve as well as they should.
- Some subject leaders have not honed their skills in leading other teachers effectively. Some of these leaders rely on senior leaders to help them carry out their

responsibilities. Senior leaders need to provide the right support so that leaders ensure there is a high quality of education in their own subject area.

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 a good 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 9–10 September 2010.

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	105348
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10111034
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	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michael McManus
Headteacher	Shauna Bowes
Website	www.st-michaels.bury.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 January 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the time of the previous inspection.
- There have also been many changes to staffing in recent years, including the appointment of new leaders.
- The governing body undertook a review of governance in 2017. There are many new governors in post.
- This school belongs to the diocese of Salford. The school had its last section 48 inspection on 12 November 2015.

Information about this inspection

- I spoke with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, a group of governors, including the two co-vice chairs of the governing body, and representatives of the local authority. I also spoke with the school improvement partner.
- I looked at a range of documentation for safeguarding, including the record of required checks carried out on school staff. I spoke with pupils about safeguarding. I reviewed

staff training logs and case files. I met with the person responsible for safeguarding to discuss how the school works to keep pupils safe.

- I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes. I observed them as they moved around the school. I also observed them at the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- I spoke with pupils about their experiences at school.
- I looked at the 39 responses to Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered the 29 free-text responses from parents to find out their views of the school. I spoke with parents as they dropped their children off.
- I carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. I talked with the leaders of these subjects. I looked at curriculum plans. I visited lessons. I looked at examples of pupils' work. I talked with teachers and pupils about what pupils were learning.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020