

Inspection of a good school: St Mary's Catholic Primary School and Nursery, Chorley

Hornchurch Drive, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 2RJ

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 June 2021

Outcome

St Mary's Catholic Primary School and Nursery, Chorley, continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy and enjoy their learning at St Mary's. They get on well together and love being with their friends at school. Pupils explained that teachers have high expectations of them. Pupils try their best to display the 'values of the week'. They are aware of the rewards and consequences associated with the school's behaviour policy. Pupils behave well. They enjoy earning points for their positive behaviour.

Pupils feel safe in school. They told inspectors that they share their worries with staff because they know that staff will listen to them. Pupils explained that, in the past, there have been some cases of bullying and name-calling. Pupils told inspectors that this rarely happens now. They said that their teachers will deal with it so that it is not repeated.

Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy taking part in a wide range of activities. There are many well-organised clubs, such as art, singing, football and netball. These activities help to develop pupils' sporting and artistic talents.

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

Leaders have planned a coherent curriculum that is suitably ambitious and meets the needs of pupils. Governors check on leaders' work to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils who leave St Mary's at the end of Year 6 achieve well. They are ready for the next stage of their education.

Subject leaders have identified the important skills and knowledge that they want pupils to learn and develop. These leaders engage in regular training to deepen their own subject knowledge. This helps them to support teachers to deliver curriculums well. They

are skilled in helping pupils to build on what they have learned before. For example, in geography, younger pupils learn about maps through aerial photos and graphical representations. By the end of key stage 2, pupils can use complex grid references on a variety of maps. This strong deepening of pupils' learning is evident across many curriculum subjects. For example, in mathematics, pupils' number fluency and rapid recall of important facts develop year on year. In design and technology, older pupils use a range of complex stitches to join materials. This builds on the gluing and sticking strategies that they learned in the early years.

Leaders have organised the phonics and early reading curriculums so that teachers introduce pupils, including children in the early years, to new sounds systematically. Across the early years and key stages 1 and 2, the teaching of phonics and early reading is consistent. Staff are appropriately trained. Their subject knowledge is secure. This supports pupils to learn new sounds well. Teachers provide pupils with appropriate books to practise the sounds they learn in class. This helps pupils to consolidate new learning while developing their reading accuracy. Pupils who fall behind in reading receive timely support to help them catch up quickly. The emphasis that leaders have placed on developing fluent readers is benefiting all pupils. Although teachers provide pupils with lots of opportunities to read, pupils' love of reading well is not well developed.

Pupils behave well in lessons and while moving around school. They are friendly and polite. Leaders ensure that children in the early years develop strong behaviour routines that set them up well for learning in key stage 1. As a result, across the school, pupils can get on with their learning without disruption.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of activities that deepen their understanding of different faiths and cultures. Pupils spoke to inspectors about how they have worked alongside a school in Kenya as part of their learning to develop their global awareness. Staff carefully plan trips to broaden pupils' learning experiences. For example, a recent residential trip for pupils in Year 6 focused on developing pupils' independence and resilience. This was to help them to prepare for the move to secondary school.

Staff are positive about the support that they receive from leaders. They appreciate the genuine care that leaders offer regarding staff's well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained and knowledgeable about their safeguarding responsibilities. As a result, staff are vigilant and understand the role that they play in keeping pupils safe. Leaders make careful checks on the suitability of adults who work in the school. School leaders work with several partner agencies so that families and pupils receive appropriate support.

Pupils who spoke with the inspectors said that they feel safe in school. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Through the computing curriculum, pupils learn how to stay safe online. Pupils are knowledgeable about the dangers of busy roads.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Despite the positive efforts from leaders to develop reading, their strategies are not nurturing pupils' enjoyment of reading. This means that few pupils can recall stories from the extensive range of authors they have read in the past. Leaders should consider how to improve their reading strategies to develop pupils' enjoyment of reading. Doing so will support pupils to broaden their vocabulary and curriculum knowledge further.

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 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 18 and 19 May 2011.

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 [here](#).

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	119672
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10194638
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	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kath Smith
Headteacher	Patrick Smyth
Website	www.chorleystmarys.lancs.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	2 February 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Catholic school. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in September 2016. The school's next section 48 inspection is due to take place in the 2021/22 academic year.
- A new chair of the governing body has been appointed since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and seven members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with two representatives of the Archdiocese of Liverpool and the lead inspector spoke with a representative of Lancashire local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding procedures. They viewed a range of safeguarding documentation.

- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also spoke with parents and carers to gather their views about the school. Inspectors considered the 57 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, including 44 free-text comments. Inspectors considered the 18 responses to Ofsted’s staff survey and the 101 responses to Ofsted’s pupil survey.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, geography and mathematics. Through this work, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke with teachers. Inspectors viewed examples of pupils’ work and spoke with them about their learning. Inspectors also spoke with the curriculum leaders for art, design and technology, and science.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons and at playtimes. As well as this, they spoke to a range of pupils about reading. Inspectors also observed pupils reading to a trusted adult.

Inspection team

John Donald, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Neil Dixon

Ofsted Inspector

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