

Inspection of a good school: St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Scarisbrick

Hall Road, Scarisbrick, Ormskirk, Lancashire L40 9QE

Inspection date:

9 February 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils readily talk about how much they enjoy school. They are proud to belong to this small and welcoming school community. Pupils said that they look forward to coming to school each day. They are keen to take part in the wide range of interesting activities on offer.

Pupils know that leaders and all staff expect them to work hard and behave well. Pupils want to do their best. There is a calm and purposeful feel to the school. Pupils are attentive in lessons and keen to share their learning with others, including visitors.

Pupils enjoy harmonious playtimes. They are happy in each other's company. Staff provide effective care and support for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils trust the adults who care for them. They are confident that staff deal with any rare incidents of bullying quickly and well.

Pupils, including those with SEND, develop into fluent readers. They also become confident mathematicians. However, leaders' development of the curriculum in some subjects is still at an early stage. Pupils do not achieve as well as they could in these subjects.

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

Leaders have begun to develop the curriculum. However, there is more to do to make clear what pupils need to learn and when they need to learn it. In some subjects, the curriculum is well established and teachers have been well trained to deliver it. They are clear about what pupils should learn. They check whether there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and plan to fill these gaps quickly. In these subjects, pupils build up their knowledge over time and achieve well.

In several other subjects, leaders' curriculum thinking is not as clear. Leaders do not check the quality of the curriculum in their subjects across the school. They do not provide teachers with the curriculum guidance that they need. Teachers do not have a secure knowledge of what pupils should learn and by when. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, do not build up their knowledge across the curriculum as well as they should.

Leaders, including governors, have made reading a priority. Children in Nursery Year make a confident start to school. They are enthusiastic and inquisitive learners who use ambitious vocabulary in their play. The children learn rhymes, listen to stories and quickly learn to recognise the initial sounds in their names. Teachers and staff ensure that the children are ready to start to learn to read as soon as they enter Reception Year.

Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme. Staff have been trained to deliver this programme well. They ensure that all children, including those with SEND, begin to build up their phonics knowledge from Reception Year. Pupils practise their reading using books that match the sounds they are learning. Those pupils who need extra support read regularly to adults. This helps them to develop their accuracy and confidence. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of learning. They can use the phonics skills they have learned accurately when they write.

Pupils read widely and often. They talked about a variety of authors and books with genuine enthusiasm. Teachers encourage pupils to read books about topics that are new to them. This broadens pupils' understanding and supports their learning across a range of subjects.

Staff are well trained in identifying pupils with SEND. Leaders and teachers put effective support in place for these pupils. This ensures that pupils with SEND get the most from their lessons and are fully involved in school life. Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders have resumed a full range of clubs, trips and visits. These support all pupils, including pupils with SEND, to develop their talents and interests.

Staff and leaders feel well supported by governors. They appreciate the support given to them to manage their workload. Staff know that leaders care for their well-being. Staff also feel well supported in ensuring that pupils maintain high standards of behaviour. That said, staff said that they seldom need this support. Pupils are keen learners and lessons are unhindered by poor behaviour.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that computing and geography may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and governors are well trained. They know how to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm and the actions to take if they have a concern. Leaders follow up any concerns

swiftly. They work with a range of external partners to ensure that pupils and their families get the help that they need.

Pupils know how to manage safeguarding risks when working and playing online. Older pupils enjoyed sharing this knowledge with younger pupils as part of their recent Safer Internet Day activities. Pupils also learn about potential risks in the community, including knife crime.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not established the essential knowledge that they expect pupils to know in several foundation subjects. This means that pupils do not have secure knowledge on which to build as they progress through the school. Leaders need to clarify their curricular thinking. They should ensure that the content of all subject curriculums is well ordered and that the key knowledge is clearly identified. This will help pupils to know and remember more across the curriculum.
- Teachers share the responsibility for subject leadership in several of the foundation subjects. They have had limited opportunities to monitor and evaluate these subjects. This reduces leaders' ability to determine what is working well and to identify where further improvements are needed. Leaders should ensure that all subjects are well led so that pupils benefit from an effective curriculum.

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, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2014.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	119683
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10212404
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	114
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Les Rippon
Headteacher	Mark Nolan
Website	www.stmaryscps.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new chair and vice-chair of governors have been appointed. A new school business manager has also been appointed.
- This school belongs to the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2018.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection that the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school. Inspectors spoke with two governors, including the chair of the governing body. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. They talked with the curriculum leaders of these subject areas. Inspectors also visited

lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. Inspectors looked at curriculum plans and samples of work from other areas of the curriculum.

- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers shared through Ofsted's Parent View survey. Inspectors also spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. Inspectors also considered the views of staff that were shared through the staff survey.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They reviewed documentation and spoke to leaders and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school, including how safe they feel. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils that were shared through the pupil survey.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation shared by school leaders, including the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and leaders' self-evaluation document.

Inspection team

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Louise McArdle

Ofsted Inspector

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