

Inspection of St Mary's RC Primary School Manchester

Clare Road, Levenshulme, Manchester M19 2QW

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Mary's flourish in an environment where they feel safe and happy. Their thirst for knowledge helps them to develop into committed and curious learners. Pupils are confident and articulate when expressing their thoughts and ideas to others. All staff have very high expectations for pupils to be successful. Pupils rise to the challenges that their teachers set for them, both academically and socially. They achieve very highly. Relationships between adults and pupils are exceptionally strong.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They show great consideration and politeness towards others. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils are confident that staff would deal with any incidents swiftly. One pupil's comment summed up the views of many when they stated, 'St Mary's is a heart-warming place. Anyone gets help if they need it.'

Pupils are proud to be part of this special community. They benefit from a wealth of experiences which helps to develop pupils into well-rounded citizens. They relish the opportunity to come together to celebrate events such as the annual, local lantern parade. Pupils also work with the local food bank and support recycling within the community. They enjoy a wide range of trips linked to their learning. These include theatre trips, art exhibitions, visits to Parliament and residential trips.

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

Leaders provide a highly effective curriculum from the early years to Year 6. In all subjects, they have thought carefully about the key knowledge that they want pupils to learn and when they should learn it. This helps pupils to achieve exceptionally well in all subjects. The provision in the early years is excellent. Children become confident and inquisitive learners. They are exceptionally well prepared for key stage 1.

Staff receive highly effective training to deliver the curriculum. This helps them to make sure that pupils develop their understanding in logical, manageable steps. This is because their learning of complex ideas is broken down into smaller steps. Staff are confident and skilled in teaching all subjects. They check pupils' prior knowledge often and new learning builds on what pupils already know. As a result, pupils understand how previous learning is relevant to their current learning. For example, in Spanish, pupils develop a secure understanding of grammar before they begin to write in Spanish by the end of key stage 2.

Leaders have made reading a high priority. Children begin their reading journey in the Nursery Year. Here, staff ensure that children listen to stories and learn rhymes and songs, as well as hear new vocabulary. This continues into the Reception class where children learn letters and sounds. Pupils are supported to read with books that closely match the sounds that they are learning. Teachers across the school readily promote a love of reading. Pupils eagerly talk about their favourite books and a wide range of authors. Teachers and other staff support any pupils who have

fallen behind to catch up quickly. By the time pupils leave the school, the vast majority become confident and fluent readers.

Staff know pupils well. They identify any pupils who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and accurately. When appropriate, leaders engage with outside agencies to help ensure that all pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers. Staff keep parents regularly informed about their children's targets and progress. These pupils are supported and challenged to achieve exceptionally well.

The school is a settled and calm environment. Excellent relationships between pupils and staff help to maintain this environment in all parts of the school. Pupils have a positive attitude to their learning. When they are learning, they work exceptionally well, including with each other. Everyone can learn without disruption.

Leaders have a strong focus on pupils' personal development. They ensure that pupils have as broad and rich an experience as possible. The outdoor grounds are used exceptionally well. This area has been well thought out to give pupils wider experiences which help to develop resilience and perseverance, such as when climbing. The COVID-19 pandemic halted some clubs and trips, but these have now resumed. There are numerous sports clubs, as well as other popular clubs such as those for computing and music. Pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibilities and take great pride in the roles that they have. These include being prefects, litter pickers, digital leaders and reading buddies for younger pupils.

Staff said that leaders consider their workload and well-being carefully. Staff appreciate the regular training opportunities made available in school and the federation.

Leaders throughout the school are focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for children in the early years and pupils across the rest of the school. Governors and trustees are very knowledgeable about the school, for example the quality of education offered to pupils. They offer leaders support but are also ready to challenge when necessary.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All staff know how to identify and report any concerns. Leaders follow up on any concerns quickly. They work effectively with external agencies and supportively with parents and carers when required. Leaders update staff regularly on any changes to safeguarding practice. Staff know the risks that children may face, including when pupils use the internet.

The curriculum successfully teaches pupils about keeping safe. From an early age, pupils learn how to report any worries that they may have. They learn where they can go for help.

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

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| Unique reference number | 105534 |
| Local authority | Manchester |
| Inspection number | 10200837 |
| 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 | 351 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Rebecca Kennedy |
| Headteacher | Mylene McGuire (Executive Headteacher) |
| Website | www.stmaryslevenshulme.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 21 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Leaders use one registered alternative provider.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection was in June 2015.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, science and physical education. As part of the deep dives, inspectors met with leaders to discuss curriculum plans, visited lessons with senior leaders, met with teachers and looked at pupils' work. They also looked at the curriculum and pupils' work in art and design, history and modern foreign languages. Inspectors met pupils from the lessons visited and looked at their

work. They met with the teachers from the classes visited. Inspectors listened to pupils reading.

- Inspectors looked at the single central record and checked the school's systems for monitoring and reporting safeguarding concerns. They also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator to help evaluate provision and practice for pupils with SEND in the school.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff and pupils to find out what it is like to be a pupil or to work in this school.
- Inspectors met with a representative group of governors.
- Inspectors reviewed key documents, including the school's self-evaluation form, school action plans and monitoring records.
- Inspectors checked all survey responses, including those from pupils, staff and parents. This included taking into account responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also met with parents before and after school.

Inspection team

Simon Hunter, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Aleksandra Hartshorne

Ofsted Inspector

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