

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

Watt Street, Sabden, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 9ED

Inspection date:

24 November 2022

Outcome

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Sabden continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Mary's Catholic School are happy and enjoy attending school. The school motto of 'all are welcome' accurately sums up its distinct ethos. Pupils say that teachers meet them at the school gates each day to help them feel ready for the day ahead. Everyone contributes to the close-knit feel of the school family.

All staff have high expectations for pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Classrooms are calm and harmonious places to learn. Pupils enjoy warm relationships with their teachers and support staff. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to teachers' instructions and do their best to work hard.

Pupils interact and play with their friends at breaktimes. They are kind and helpful towards each other. Pupils are confident that leaders and staff will listen to their concerns. Leaders deal well with any incidents of bullying. Adults swiftly address minor falling outs.

Pupils relish taking on leadership roles in the school, including pupil chaplain. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are encouraged to engage in a plethora of extra-curricular activities. Staff offer a wide range of activities that spark pupils' interest including handbell club, craft club and yoga.

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

Leaders have created an inclusive place to learn. They are ambitious for every pupil. Overall, leaders have a well-thought-out curriculum and learning environment that helps pupils to learn over time. They have thought carefully about the building blocks of knowledge that will help pupils to know and remember more.

Leaders have created a curriculum that combines the requirements of the national curriculum with the needs and interests of the pupils. Staff have carefully considered the challenges of mixed-age classes. Consequently, teachers have designed and ordered

learning in a way that enables pupils to develop a secure understanding of key concepts appropriate to their phase of learning.

In this small school, subject leaders each take responsibility for a number of subjects. Leaders are honest that assessment in some subjects is less developed than in others. Teachers are adept at spotting and addressing misconceptions in pupils' learning as they arise. That said, teachers are sometimes missing opportunities to assess and revisit pupils' prior learning and address gaps that may have arisen in their understanding of previously taught concepts.

Leaders understand the importance of teaching pupils to read well. Leaders have introduced a new phonics curriculum and this is taught as soon as children enter the school in the Reception year. The books that the youngest children read are very well matched to the letter sounds they know. Teachers ensure that this is also true for the books pupils take home. Teachers closely track the letters and sounds pupils know, to identify any gaps in their learning. If anyone finds reading difficult, they get additional help so that they can keep up. All teachers and teaching assistants in the school are well-trained in phonics and high-quality support makes sure that pupils do not fall behind. Pupils of all ages talk enthusiastically about their favourite books.

Pupils with SEND take part in all aspects of school life. The identification of, and support for, pupils with SEND are a priority. Teachers make sure that these pupils access the same curriculum as their peers by adapting the delivery of learning activities as necessary. Leaders work closely with parents and outside professionals to make sure that the needs of this group of pupils are being met.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They are understanding and inclusive of a small number of pupils who sometimes struggle to manage their own behaviour. Pupils say that staff deal with any low-level disruption in a fair and consistent way. Pupils are extremely kind to each other and feel that they can 'join in'. Pupils are courteous and welcoming of visitors.

Leaders give high priority to pupils' personal development. Teachers develop pupils' cultural awareness through local history; for example, the Pendle witches. Furthermore, pupils learn about national and global events of moral and cultural significance, such as Remembrance Day and the Black Lives Matter movement. Pupils are vocal about celebrating difference and creating a community where everyone is welcome. There is a good range of clubs and activities on offer. Pupils enjoy going on a variety of trips to different cultural, adventure and historical venues.

The school is exceptionally well led and managed by the headteacher. She is supported by an effective governing body who know the staff, pupils and their families well. Staff love working at the school. They appreciate the actions of leaders to help to manage their workload and support their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. All staff know what to be alert to. They can spot the signs of abuse and neglect. They know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. Systems are in place to identify and support pupils at risk of harm.

Leaders are adept at working with a wide range of external agencies. Strong relationships between staff and families allow for an understanding of different family circumstances and any support or help these families might need. Leaders are persistent in securing the right support for them.

Staff teach pupils how to stay safe. Pupils are very aware of the risks they may face when online and how to manage them. Pupils know who they can speak to if they are feeling worried.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment as effectively as they could. They are not consistently able to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. This means that teachers do not always know what subject content pupils need to revisit and practise before moving on. Leaders should ensure that there are clear assessment strategies in place for teachers to use.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 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.

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	119651
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10240651
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michael Mulrooney
Headteacher	Claire Halstead
Website	www.stmaryssabden.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The school's previous section 48 inspection was carried out in April 2018.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision for pupils at the school.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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, subject leaders and other members of staff. Inspectors also spoke with members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Salford.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.

- Inspectors checked the school’s safeguarding policies and procedures and the single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and some pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses to Ofsted’s surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Kate Bowker, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Amanda Downing

His Majesty’s Inspector

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