

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

Belgrave Street, Radcliffe, Manchester, Lancashire M26 4DG

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 December 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy school where pupils enjoy their learning. They work hard and rise to leaders' high expectations for their behaviour and achievement. Pupils, including children in the early years, conduct themselves well.

Pupils told inspectors that staff care for them. They explained how they have benefited from a recent workshop on being a good friend. Pupils are safe. They show kindness and respect towards each other. Pupils said that leaders deal effectively with bullying.

Leaders are ambitious that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), will achieve well. They are successful in making this happen. In most subjects, pupils learn well and develop their knowledge securely over time. Due to a well-designed early years curriculum, children are well prepared for key stage 1.

Pupils regularly take part in many after-school activities to keep them healthy in mind and body. Leaders are proud of the significant number of pupils with SEND who represent the school in inter-school sports tournaments.

Leaders and staff encourage and support pupils to become confident young leaders. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities for them to lead and take responsibility in roles such as play leaders and school council representatives. The reading ambassadors provide effective support to some of the youngest pupils.

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

Overall, leaders have developed an effective curriculum, including in the early years. In many areas teachers choose appropriate activities to deliver the curriculum well. Teachers make lessons engaging and memorable. Support staff ably help pupils to access their learning. However, there are a few subjects where teachers are not as secure in their subject knowledge. Although pupils achieve well overall, this weakness hinders how well some pupils achieve in some subjects.

Teachers are skilled in identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge and in addressing any misconceptions that pupils may develop. Teachers use the information that they glean from their checks on how well pupils are learning in order to adapt the delivery of the curriculum. This includes for pupils with SEND. However, some teachers do not use assessment strategies as effectively as they could to check on how well pupils have learned subject-specific vocabulary. This limits the depth of some pupils' subject knowledge.

Reading is prioritised well. Leaders have successfully raised the profile of reading across the school. Staff deliver a clear, well-ordered phonics programme from the moment children start in the early years. Staff use a wide range of strategies to help pupils to remember letters and sounds and to apply them when reading.

Staff support children and pupils who fall behind with their reading knowledge to catch up quickly. Typically, pupils told inspectors that they enjoy reading. They get to hear adults in school read to them regularly. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read confidently and fluently.

Leaders identify and assess pupils' additional learning needs with accuracy. They support teachers in successfully adapting the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils with SEND learn the curriculum well.

Pupils' behaviour is a strength, and they are enthusiastic learners. There is a calm, focused and respectful atmosphere around the school. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning enable them to learn without disruption.

Leaders have planned a personal development curriculum that prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils spoke passionately about the wider personal development curriculum. They enjoy receiving rewards, for example stickers, postcards and certificates, in recognition of their contribution to the school and local community.

Pupils experience a range of sports and cultural events to develop their talents and interests. There is a strong focus on celebrating diversity in all of its forms. Leaders prioritise the support of pupils' mental and emotional health and well-being. Pupils spoke positively about being able to visit the school's social worker, where they can talk about their feelings, calm down, or have time to think.

Governors know the school well and they carry out their statutory roles effectively. For example, they hold leaders fully to account for the quality of education that pupils receive.

Staff are proud to work at the school and feel that leaders support them well. For example, staff praised leaders' consideration of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have clear procedures in place to keep pupils safe. Staff are well trained in safeguarding and can quickly identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff report any concerns about a pupil's welfare quickly and in line with leaders' safeguarding arrangements.

Leaders with overall responsibility for safeguarding work well with external agencies so that pupils and their families receive appropriate and timely support when necessary.

Leaders ensure that the personal development curriculum reflects any current safeguarding issues and that it gives pupils the information that they need to stay safe. For example, pupils are aware of ways to stay safe online and who they can go to if they are at risk of harm.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, some pupils do not have secure grasp of subject-specific vocabulary. This hinders how deeply some pupils learn subject topics and concepts. Leaders should ensure that pupils have a strong understanding of subject-specific terminology to enable them to excel.
- Some teachers do not have secure subject knowledge. This prevents some pupils from learning as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that staff have secure subject knowledge across all the subjects that they teach.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2017.

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

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| Unique reference number | 105353 |
| Local authority | Bury |
| Inspection number | 10240767 |
| 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 | 413 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Craig Rayner |
| Headteacher | John Travis |
| Website | www.stmarys-radcliffe.org.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 5 and 6 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School is part of the Diocese of Salford. The last section 48 inspection took place in November 2014.
- Governors run a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. The inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, he spoke with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were considered as part of this inspection.

- The inspector carried out a scrutiny of the school's single central record of pre-employment checks on staff as well as reviewing other safeguarding records.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to a trusted adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and during social times. The inspector also considered pupils' wider personal development.
- The inspector considered the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussions and their responses to Ofsted's online surveys. This included responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Andrew Morley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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