

Inspection of St Maxentius CofE Primary School

New Heys Way, Bradshaw, Bolton, Lancashire BL2 4AE

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

The warm and friendly welcome provided by staff each morning helps pupils to feel positive and secure as soon as they arrive each day. Parents and carers appreciate the approachability of staff because it creates a sense of community.

Pupils enjoy their time at school. They get on well together and make friends easily. Pupils forge strong relationships with caring staff. Pupils feel confident that staff will listen to their concerns. Staff know them well and do their best to support them. This helps them to feel safe.

Pupils make every effort to reach the high expectations that leaders have of them. In lessons, pupils work hard and learn with interest and enthusiasm. They behave well and treat each other with consideration. Pupils were keen to explain the school's bystander pledge which means that they would not stand by if someone was being treated unkindly. Leaders act swiftly to resolve any issues about bullying.

Pupils value the many clubs on offer such as chess, sports and musical theatre that appeal to a wide range of interests.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In most subjects, leaders have identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn. This knowledge is ordered carefully so that new ideas build well on pupils' previous learning.

Subject leaders provide valuable guidance and support for teachers in the effective delivery of the curriculum. A particular focus on vocabulary ensures that pupils learn to use and understand a range of subject-specific terms confidently and accurately. In most subjects, teachers make use of their strong subject knowledge to explain new learning clearly. They use assessment strategies to check pupils' understanding and act quickly to address any misconceptions. As a result, pupils, including children in the early years, progress well through the curriculum in many subjects.

In one or two subjects, where curriculums have been introduced more recently, the content and order of learning are less clear. In these subjects, teachers' subject knowledge is not as well developed. This hinders how well pupils deepen their understanding of important concepts over time.

Leaders in the early years have given careful thought to designing a curriculum that provides children with a strong start. The encouragement and lively enthusiasm of staff ensure that children listen intently. Children are happy in their environment. They enjoy learning and achieve well.

Leaders have ensured that pupils' learning to read well is a priority for all. Children start to learn how to recognise sounds and letters as soon as they start in the Reception class. All staff have received training in the new clearly structured phonics programme. This helps to ensure that they deliver the phonics curriculum well. Leaders keep a close check on pupils' progress in reading and make sure that teachers provide effective additional support for those pupils who fall behind. As a result, almost all pupils learn to read fluently and accurately by the end of Year 2.

Older pupils speak enthusiastically about the high-quality literature that is a core feature of the curriculum. They are eager to talk about their favourite books and authors and take pride in counting the number of minutes they have spent reading each week.

Leaders have strengthened their systems to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified early. Pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. However, some teachers and support staff lack confidence in adapting the curriculum to ensure that pupils with SEND develop their independence.

Pupils behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. The atmosphere in lessons is calm and purposeful. As a result, pupils' learning is rarely disrupted.

Pupils display a keen interest in learning about different beliefs, families and cultures. They adopt a mature and thoughtful approach to discussions about themes such as democracy and equality. Pupils understand that everyone should be treated with respect, regardless of their differences.

Governors are highly involved in the life of the school. They are proud of the improvements they have seen over recent years. However, the board of trustees has not ensured that the local governors effectively fulfil all of their delegated roles. The local governing body relies heavily on the board of trustees to strengthen its work.

Leaders communicate and engage well in the community. Parents hold the school in high regard. Teachers, including those at the early stage of their careers, value the support and development opportunities they receive. Staff appreciate that school leaders are mindful of their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training so that they remain alert to the signs that might indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff follow clear procedures to report any concerns, and these are followed up promptly by leaders. The safeguarding team works well with outside agencies to access support for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe when online and in the community. For example, they learn about how to avoid risks near water and how to ride a bicycle safely. Pupils recognise some of the features of healthy relationships such as consent.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not considered fully the important knowledge that pupils need to learn or how new ideas build on previous learning. This prevents pupils from developing their understanding of some important concepts. Leaders should ensure that teachers are clear about the essential curriculum content that pupils should learn and when they should learn it.
- Teachers have not received sufficient training in adapting their teaching approaches to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. This means that some pupils with SEND become overly reliant on adult support. Leaders should ensure that teachers are trained well to adapt their approaches to meet the needs of pupils with SEND so that these pupils can access the curriculum with confidence and achieve well.
- The board of trustees has not ensured that members of the local governing body fulfil all of their delegated duties properly. This includes holding leaders to account effectively and making sure that the school website is compliant. Trustees should ensure that governors have the information and skills that they need to carry out their duties effectively.

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	146141
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10256071
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christopher Bracegirdle
Headteacher	Lisa Cousen
Website	www.st-maxentius.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Maxentius C of E Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2018. When its predecessor school, St Maxentius CofE Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Archbishop Temple Church of England Multi Academy Trust.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Manchester.
- The school's last section 48 inspection took place in July 2016.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- Leaders do not currently make use of alternative provision for any pupils.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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 held discussions with the headteacher and other leaders. They also spoke with subject leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with four members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with the chair of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, during playtimes and around the school. They spoke with different groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school, their learning, their behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They reviewed documentation, checked attendance information and spoke to leaders, governors, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' work in mathematics. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also considered aspects of several other subjects on the school's curriculum.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers and considered their views which were shared through Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text comments received from parents. Inspectors also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation shared by school leaders, including the school development plan, the minutes taken at governors' meetings and leaders' self-evaluation documentation.

Inspection team

Janette Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Clare Baron

Ofsted Inspector

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