

# Inspection of St Marie's Catholic Primary School Standish

Avondale Street, Standish, Wigan, Lancashire WN6 0LF

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Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected since 16 January 2008.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders and staff enable pupils to shine at St Marie's Catholic Primary School. Pupils love coming to school and they thrive. Their happiness is reflected in their exceptionally positive attitudes to learning.

Leaders want pupils to achieve the very best outcomes. They are highly successful in making this happen. Pupils are remarkably well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Leaders have set out an extremely ambitious curriculum for pupils. In the early years, children are inspired to learn. For example, children become engrossed in the story of the day. Children are fully prepared for the demands of Year 1.

Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 also achieve extremely highly in all aspects of their learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 engaged in mature discussions about how women affected the space race. Pupils show very secure knowledge, skills and understanding across the full range of subjects. Pupils' achievement is excellent.

Pupils are polite and courteous. They show high levels of care towards one another. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable throughout the school day, including at social times. On the very rare occasion any incident might happen, for example bullying, leaders deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils feel safe in the care of their teachers.

Pupils experience a rich programme of extra-curricular activities. They are enthused by the range of clubs which foster their talents and interests.

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

St Marie's is a high-achieving school across every key stage. From the early years to Year 6, pupils benefit from an exceptionally well-designed curriculum. For example, leaders have identified with precision and clarity the knowledge that pupils must know and remember in each subject. The curriculum is carefully tailored to pupils' individual learning needs. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils gain an impressive depth of knowledge. They make strong connections between new knowledge and prior learning. All pupils excel as a result of a culture of academic excellence.

Teachers deliver the curriculum consistently well. They skilfully design learning activities that inspire pupils. Teachers enable pupils to develop a deep and rich body of subject knowledge. Leaders' systems to assess pupils are highly effective. Teachers address any misunderstandings and misconceptions immediately. Pupils' ability to recall and apply their learning is remarkable.

In the early years, teachers ensure that every aspect of the environment supports children's learning and development. Teachers are skilful in using assessment

information to adapt the early years curriculum to meet the needs of children. Children in the early years achieve highly.

Learning to read is at the heart of this school. Children hang on every word when their teachers read stories to them. Throughout the early years, skilled staff teach letter sounds with precision. Teachers deliver the phonics programme consistently well. They have been trained to be experts in early reading. On the very rare occasion a pupil may need extra support, they are well guided to catch up quickly.

Pupils' love of reading continues as they move through the school. Pupils see for themselves the value of reading and what joy it brings to them. They discuss with great knowledge and detail about what they have read. Pupils told inspectors that reading helps them to develop their understanding of the world around them.

Pupils with SEND benefit from an exceptionally high quality of education. Leaders skilfully identify and assess pupils with SEND. They work with staff to remove any barriers which may stop pupils with SEND learning well. This means that these pupils achieve as highly as their peers.

Pupils' behaviour is praiseworthy. They are excellent ambassadors for their school. Pupils' rates of attendance are excellent. From the early years, routines are well established. Even the youngest children sustain high levels of concentration on the task at hand. There is absolutely no disruption to learning anywhere in the school.

The curriculum to promote pupils' personal development is noteworthy. It is well designed to ensure that pupils have the knowledge and skills to become successful members of modern-day Britain. Staff go above and beyond to provide pupils with a wide range of enrichment activities. For example, the carefully planned expressive arts lessons dovetail with the school's main curriculum. Staff ensure that pupils get the opportunity to excel in all areas of the wider curriculum. For example, pupils' wider knowledge of the world allows them to debate relevant and topical issues with profound understanding and empathy. Pupils' understanding of equality is outstanding.

Governors and leaders embrace and relish the challenge to ensure that pupils continue to receive an outstanding education. They identify with precision what the staff need to do to sustain high levels of achievement for pupils. They evaluate their actions with a razor-sharp focus. Staff report high levels of consideration for their workload and well-being. They are proud to work at St Marie's.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders create an impressive culture of safeguarding at St Marie's. Leaders ensure that staff are highly skilled to spot any potential harm which pupils may experience. This is because the safeguarding training provided by leaders is well designed to reflect the needs of pupils and staff. Staff report any safeguarding concerns in a

timely manner. Leaders work well with a range of different agencies to keep pupils safe. This collaborative work is highly effective.

Pupils learn in many ways about how to keep themselves safe. They have a thorough understanding of how to use this knowledge in different contexts. This includes when they are online.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106493
<b>Local authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	10226344
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	241
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Frances Cheetham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Melanie Smith
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.saintmaries.wigan.sch.uk">www.saintmaries.wigan.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 January 2008, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- This Catholic school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection took place in October 2019.

## 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 that 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 met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with a range of leaders who are responsible for the school's pastoral system and personal development programmes.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with the subject leader, visited lessons, talked to pupils and looked at pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of governors, a representative from the Archdiocese of Liverpool, the school improvement partner and a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils in Years 1 to 3 reading to familiar adults.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' policies and procedures to keep pupils safe. Inspectors discussed safeguarding arrangements with leaders and staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

### **Inspection team**

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Michelle Ridsdale

Ofsted Inspector

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