

Inspection of St Mary and St John Catholic Primary School

Standishgate, Wigan, Lancashire WN1 1XL

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

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

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 February 2007.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning show that they love being at school. They have a powerful sense of belonging to this friendly and caring school community. They develop exceptional relationships with staff and with each other. Pupils feel included and valued. They feel safe, and they are kept safe.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. When staff need to address any misbehaviour or incidents of bullying, they deal with it swiftly and decisively. Pupils are eager to please. They meet the exacting standards that staff set for their conduct.

Leaders set ambitious expectations for all pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils excel academically because of the effective way in which teachers put these expectations into practice.

Pupils relish meeting the inspiring visitors that come to the school, such as theatre workshops or speakers for careers guidance. Pupils also access a very wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and interests. These include tuition to learn a musical instrument, having the chance to play sports and attending interesting clubs such as engineering or gardening.

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

Leaders, including those in the early years, have designed an ambitious curriculum that enables pupils to build their knowledge over time exceptionally well. Leaders have defined the key knowledge that they want pupils to gain in all subjects. This means that teachers are absolutely clear about what they want pupils to learn in the short and long term.

Pupils remember what they have learned. This is because teachers provide clear instructions and explanations and learning is purposeful. Teachers check regularly on pupils' learning. They make excellent use of this information to make sure that any gaps in learning are addressed quickly. As a result, pupils across the school progress through the curriculum smoothly and successfully. Pupils' work demonstrates the depth of their subject knowledge. Across the school, pupils' achievement is remarkable.

Leaders have ensured that reading has the highest priority. All staff have received comprehensive training so that they are highly effective in delivering the school's phonics programme. In the Reception Year, children get off to a swift start in learning to read. They confidently read the sounds displayed throughout the well-designed environment. In key stage 1, teachers continually check to see what pupils have remembered. There is highly effective support for pupils who need more help remembering their phonics work. This helps them to catch up quickly. Pupils become increasingly accomplished readers as they progress through the school.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND at an early stage. They place a strong emphasis on ensuring that these pupils are included and access the same curriculum as other pupils. The highly effective support that these pupils receive enables many of them to achieve as well as their peers.

Pupils are a credit to the school. Their behaviour in lessons ensures that they focus very well on their learning. Pupils play highly effective roles in maintaining behaviour in the school, such as acting as play leaders for younger pupils. Pupils' attitudes are also reflected in their high rates of attendance.

The parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View, and those that inspectors spoke to at the start of the school day, were full of praise for the way in which leaders nurture pupils' personal development. Children in the early years are inspired to learn about the world around them. This builds in key stages 1 and 2 so that all pupils gain an exceptional knowledge of other cultures, equalities and different faiths. Pupils' in-depth knowledge of fundamental British values informs their own lives and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Governors are highly effective in their role. They have worked well with leaders to set a clear vision for school improvement. Governors know the school well. They offer meaningful challenge to leaders to continually enhance the curriculum. Staff value the support that leaders and governors provide for their well-being and to manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong, well-established culture of vigilance in the school. Staff receive comprehensive training which is continually updated. They know pupils and their families well. This helps staff to spot any signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm.

Leaders share information with relevant agencies to make sure that pupils who are at risk are protected and supported.

The curriculum is highly effective in ensuring that pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when using social media or when 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

Unique reference number	106459
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10199363
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Angela Whitney
Headteacher	Louise Vose
Website	www.saintmaryandjohn.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 February 2007, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes to the senior leadership team and the governing body since the previous inspection. A new headteacher took up post in 2013. All governors have been appointed since the school was last inspected.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- This is a Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character took place in September 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 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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the

curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also heard pupils read individually and as part of classroom activities.

- The inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum in a wide range of other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work for these subjects.
- The inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day and took into account the views of those who responded to Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspectors also took into account the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at breaktimes and when walking round the school. They discussed behaviour and bullying with pupils, senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils, parents and leaders about the provision in place for pupils' personal development.
- The inspectors met with different groups of pupils to ask them about safeguarding. The inspectors reviewed documentation, which included the school's safeguarding policy, register of the checks carried out on new employees and safeguarding records.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lisa Whittaker

Ofsted Inspector

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