

Inspection of a good school: St Ambrose RC Primary School

Princess Road, Chorlton-Cum-Hardy, Manchester M21 7QA

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 April 2023

Outcome

St Ambrose RC Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this happy and friendly school. Pupils, families and staff greet each other warmly every morning, showing the positive relationships that are in place. Pupils and families talk about the 'love and care' they receive from staff. There is a real sense of community in this school, where everyone looks out for everyone else. As a result, pupils feel safe in school.

Leaders want the best for every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils live up to leaders' high expectations for their behaviour and achievement. Pupils play a role in decision making in school by applying for leadership positions. For example, the 'GIFT team' supports worship and the ethos of the school.

Pupils behave well. Around school, they are polite and respectful. Older pupils act as role models for younger pupils. If bullying ever happens, adults quickly step in and deal with it effectively.

Pupils enjoy the range of opportunities on offer. Outside, coaches provide a variety of activities for pupils to engage in. These range from different sports to quieter activities and opportunities to sing, dance and perform. Leaders are also keen to ensure that there is a range of clubs that pupils can join.

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

Leaders have built an ambitious curriculum. They have planned the curriculum in well-ordered steps as pupils move through the year groups. The curriculum in the early years is ambitious and well designed. Leaders have identified the knowledge and experiences they want children in the early years to gain to prepare them for Year 1. They have worked with staff throughout the school to ensure teachers know what they need to

teach and when to teach it. This provides a secure foundation for their future learning. Pupils learn and achieve well, including those with SEND.

Teachers have an effective knowledge of most of the subjects they teach. This enables them to deliver the curriculum content as the leaders intend. In a few subjects, teachers' knowledge of the subject content and the most effective teaching approaches to use are not as strongly developed as in others. This results in pupils not having enough opportunities to build on previous work or to deepen their knowledge and remember it over time.

Teachers check how well pupils are learning. This helps them to identify which pupils need more help or guidance. Staff deliver additional tutoring sessions over a number of weeks to support these pupils in catching up and keeping up with their class mates.

Leaders make sure that pupils learn phonics through a well-ordered curriculum. This begins when children start in the early years. Pupils' reading books are well matched to their recall of phonics. Any pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their knowledge of phonics are identified early. Additional and effective support is provided for these pupils. This means that, by the end of key stage 1, most pupils can read confidently.

Leaders prioritise reading. Teachers provide lots of opportunities for pupils to read or to listen to stories throughout the school day. In key stage 2, the reading curriculum promotes their understanding of a wide range of texts. It also develops their comprehension skills. Older pupils are developing effective reading habits. They read fluently and talk with enthusiasm about the books they have read.

Leaders have developed clear procedures to identify the specific needs of pupils with SEND. They have adapted the curriculum for some pupils, providing greater opportunities to meet their needs. Leaders ensure that staff receive training to help these pupils to follow the same ambitious curriculum as that of their peers.

Children in the early years understand the routines that help them work and play safely and purposefully. Pupils across the rest of the school behave well. They listen carefully in class and are well behaved around the school. They concentrate on their learning and are keen to do their best. Therefore, any disruption to learning is rare.

Pupils enjoy the many wider opportunities available to them, including day visits and residential experiences. They participate in a wide range of after-school clubs and lunchtime activities. Pupils learn how to keep themselves fit and healthy. They have a well-developed knowledge of diversity. They understand fairness, and they know that everyone is equal.

Staff talked positively about the strong and supportive teamwork in the school. They know that leaders consider their workload when they introduce new initiatives. They comment that they are proud to work at the school.

Governors know the school very well. They work productively with leaders to be aware of how effectively the curriculum is helping pupils to know more and remember more.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

School leaders understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff know the school's procedures well. Leaders ensure that staff complete appropriate training and keep staff's knowledge of safeguarding up to date. This, along with their knowledge of the children and their families, helps them to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm swiftly and promptly. Leaders' effective liaison with other agencies ensures that pupils and families are well supported.

Pupils are taught about keeping themselves safe. For example, they learn about online safety and the impact of cyber-bullying. Older pupils attend workshops where they are taught about how to take responsibility for their own safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teachers' knowledge of the curriculum content and the most effective way to teach the subject are not as strongly developed as in others. This means that, in these subjects, some pupils do not remember important learning. Leaders should support staff to develop a greater knowledge of the curriculum content and help them to select the best teaching approaches to allow pupils to retain their learning and deepen their understanding over time.

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 November 2013.

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	105520
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10286230
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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Margaret Cunningham
Acting Headteacher	Wayne Cunningham
Website	www.st-ambrose.manchester.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	24 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative providers for pupils.
- This school is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided school. The last section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character took place in November 2016.
- An acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher were appointed at the beginning of the spring term.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the acting headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher and with other leaders and members of staff. He spoke with members of the governing body. He also spoke with representatives of the local authority and diocese.

- The inspector looked at a range of documents and spoke with leaders about the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. He talked with curriculum leaders of these subject areas. The inspector also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. He also observed some pupils reading to staff.
- The inspector also considered other subjects. He spoke with leaders about the curriculums in these subjects and their implementation.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in class and as pupils moved around the school. He also observed pupils in the dining hall and playing outside at lunchtime.
- The inspectors spoke with a group of pupils about their experiences at school.
- The inspector looked at the responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View, including the free-text responses. He also met with parents before school to find out their views of the school.
- The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Ian Shackleton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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