

# Inspection of St Mary's RC Primary School

Milner Street, Swinton, Manchester M27 4AS

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Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2023

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

This school was last inspected 15 years ago and judged 'outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer than usual gap between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the previous inspection.

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

Everyone in this school community is enormously proud to be a part of St Mary's. Warm and trusting relationships are at the heart of the school. For example, staff and pupils respect each other.

Pupils' understanding of the importance of tolerating other people's differences is admirable. Pupils follow the school's core values, including to love, to inspire and to achieve. They live out these values in their everyday lives at St Mary's.

Pupils know that they can report any worries to an adult in school. For example, leaders deal with any incidents of bullying effectively. This helps pupils to feel content, happy and safe.

Leaders set high expectations for pupils behaviour. For example, in lessons, pupils conduct themselves well. Their attitudes to learning are strong. Disruptions to learning rarely occur.

Pupils love to come to school to learn. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They expect pupils to achieve highly. In a range of subjects, pupils achieve well. Overall, pupils, including children in the early years, are appropriately prepared for the next stages in their education.

The way that leaders foster pupils' personal development is remarkable. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to develop their character, such as by participating in charity events, singing at the local supermarket, and by taking part in exciting activities on residential trips.

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

Leaders have crafted a curriculum which is broad and balanced. The curriculum engages and excites pupils in learning. They are curious to learn new things. From the early years to Year 6, leaders carefully consider the order in which learning should happen. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to build up their knowledge and understanding of different curriculum areas. Teachers deliver the curriculum well. They have strong subject knowledge. Teachers present learning clearly to pupils.

In the main, teachers check that pupils are retaining important knowledge over time. However, on occasions, some teachers do not check with sufficient precision whether pupils have secure enough foundations on which to build the next steps in their learning. As a result, some pupils do not build up their knowledge as securely as they could do over time.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND receive a high-quality education. Teachers are quick to identify when pupils with SEND need additional help and support. Teachers

successfully use the information that they have about pupils with SEND to enable them to access the same curriculum as their peers. The quality and range of support that teachers and other adults provide ensures that these pupils achieve well.

Leaders make reading a top priority. This begins in the early years, where adults surround children with a variety of books. Children in the Nursery class enjoy learning different rhymes, songs and poems. They benefit from learning initial sounds.

Children in the Reception class get off to a strong start with the school's phonics programme. Leaders have trained staff well to deliver this programme. For example, staff model sounds to pupils accurately. While leaders track pupils to identify those who are not keeping up with their reading, some pupils have gaps in their phonics knowledge. This is because teachers are not checking closely enough that pupils have remembered the sounds. Leaders have appropriate plans in place to address this minor weakness. Added to this, leaders provide timely support to help these pupils to catch up with their classmates.

The school is a calm environment. From the early years, children learn the school rules. They concentrate on their learning, maintaining focus on the task at hand. This continues throughout the school. Pupils move around the site sensibly. At playtimes, pupils use the equipment with care. They share the space outside well to ensure that all their friends can play together.

Leaders have worked to improve attendance. They have put into place some successful strategies to support some pupils to attend school more regularly. However, a few pupils still do not attend school as often as they should. This means that they are missing aspects of the school's exciting curriculum.

The curriculum to promote pupils' personal development is exemplary. Pastoral care is a significant strength of the school. For example, pupils value the way that leaders and teachers support their mental health and well-being.

Pupils' understanding of fundamental British values is commendable. They articulate why they are important and how they will help them become responsible members of society. Pupils take every chance that they can outside of lessons to learn. For example, they relish visits to various places of interest. Children in the early years also take part in a wide range of visits, which bring the curriculum to life.

Governors, leaders and staff are resolute in ensuring that pupils get the education that they deserve. Governors ask challenging questions of leaders, holding them robustly to account for the performance of pupils. Leaders place equal emphasis on staff's well-being. Staff report that they feel supported because leaders consider their workload and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders know their community and families well. All adults are well-trained to ensure that they can spot any potential signs of harm in pupils. They accept that safeguarding concerns 'could happen here'.

Staff report their concerns to leaders in a timely manner. Leaders tenaciously follow up on any issues or concerns raised. Leaders keep staff up to date with developments in safeguarding matters through regular training and short briefings. Leaders work with many different agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the timely support that they need.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn about how to keep themselves safe. This includes when online, when crossing roads and when riding a bike.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Occasionally, some teachers do not check that pupils have secure enough foundations on which to build new learning. This hinders how well some pupils build up their knowledge of topics and concepts over time. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment systems consistently well to check how well pupils are retaining essential information.
- A small number of pupils do not attend school as often as they should. This means that they are missing important learning. Leaders should continue to work with families to ensure that these pupils attend school regularly.

## **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>	105957
<b>Local authority</b>	Salford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10226356
<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>	231
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Alison Stones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dee Raynor
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmarys-swinton.co.uk">www.stmarys-swinton.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 June 2008, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- This Roman Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The last section 48 inspection took place in June 2018.

## 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 met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They met with a range of leaders who were responsible for the school's behaviour and personal development programmes.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils and looked at pupils' work. They also reviewed two other subjects in the curriculum.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors. He met with a representative of the local authority and he spoke to a representative of the Diocese of Salford by telephone.
- Inspectors observed some pupils in Year 1 to Year 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe. They discussed safeguarding arrangements with leaders and staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and as they moved around the school. They scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

### **Inspection team**

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gareth Counce

Ofsted Inspector

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