

Inspection of St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Middleton

Wood Street, Langley, Middleton, Manchester M24 5GL

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 May 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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive at St Mary's Primary School with a beaming smile, ready for the day ahead. They are happy. They are also keen and excited by learning new things. Pupils have many opportunities to learn beyond the curriculum. For example, pupils attend a debate club, and they compete at a national level in London. Many pupils also get the opportunity to learn a musical instrument.

Leaders set high aspirations for pupils' achievement and behaviour. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They ensure that this aspiration permeates throughout the school, reaching all pupils and children in the early years.

Leaders have worked hard to close the gaps that many pupils have had as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, pupils who currently attend the school are achieving well. Children in the early years are well prepared for Year 1.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They are proud of their school. They follow the school rules diligently. Pupils show high levels of respect for every member of this diverse school community. If bullying takes place, adults deal with it successfully so that it does not happen again. Pupils know who to turn to if they need any support. This helps pupils to feel safe in school.

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

The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND and those children in the early years. Leaders have set out a well-thought-out curriculum, which is delivered in a logical order. They have thought about the knowledge, skills and experiences that pupils should encounter in many different subjects. Leaders set out clear end points in the curriculum, and they know exactly what pupils must achieve by that stage.

In many subjects, pupils' achievement is improving quickly as a result of leaders' curriculum developments. Published outcomes in 2022 do not reflect current pupils' achievement. Across most subjects, current pupils learn well. However, in one or two subjects, some pupils' achievement is still not as secure as it could be. This is because, in these few remaining subjects, the curriculum is still being finalised.

Typically, teachers deliver the curriculum well, including in the early years. They choose appropriate activities which allow pupils to learn new information. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge. They use leaders' assessment systems well to establish exactly what pupils have learned in lessons. Teachers ensure that pupils get sufficient opportunities to revisit previous learning.

A love of reading permeates the school. Pupils enjoy regular visits to the well-stocked library, where they get to choose from a wealth of different literature. Pupils explained that this inspires them to read a variety of different authors, poets and

genres. Children in the early years also regularly hear and repeat songs, rhymes and stories. This helps to develop children's listening skills and enriches their vocabulary.

Leaders have made suitable improvements to the phonics lessons that pupils receive. A well-structured phonics programme is in place. All staff have received relevant training to ensure that phonics sessions are delivered consistently well. Staff model sounds accurately and identify pupils' misconceptions quickly. Those pupils who need a little extra help to keep up with their peers receive effective support. Overall, the books that pupils read match the sounds that they know. In the main, pupils become confident, fluent readers.

In the main, leaders have established clear systems to identify and assess pupils with SEND. In most cases, leaders help teachers to understand where these pupils require adaptations to their learning. When these pupils' needs are identified clearly, they receive the support that they need to achieve well. However, in a minority of cases, the precise adaptations that pupils require for their learning have not been thought out with sufficient clarity.

Pupils treat each other with kindness around the school. There is a positive atmosphere for learning. In the Nursery class, staff place a high emphasis on ensuring that children learn the school rules and routines. This helps them settle into school life as quickly as possible. Across the school, pupils typically remain focused in lessons. Learning is not interrupted, enabling pupils to learn without distractions.

The pastoral care that pupils receive is strong. Staff show high levels of care and support for pupils, prioritising their physical and mental health needs. Pupils equally view their mental health as important. For example, pupils support each other through their 'High 5' work at playtime or lunchtime. Pupils' understanding of equality is secure. They view everyone as equal. Pupils are proud to learn about, and celebrate, diversity and difference. Leaders ensure that pupils participate in enrichment opportunities that develop their wider talents and skills.

Governors, leaders and staff share a common aspirational vision for pupils' achievement. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Leaders take positive action to ensure that everyone's workload and well-being are managed well. Staff value the support they receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Well-established systems are in place to ensure that all staff know their role in keeping pupils safe. Staff are well trained to spot the signs that pupils might be at risk of harm. Adults are clear about what they need to do if they have a concern. Leaders make effective connections with different agencies to ensure that pupils receive timely support when required.

Pupils learn many ways in which they can keep themselves safe. This includes online and when they encounter new risks. There is a strong culture of safeguarding that pervades this school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some of the changes that leaders have introduced to some subjects within the curriculum are not embedded. This means some pupils' achievement in these remaining curriculum areas is not as high as it could be. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking so that pupils' achievement improves further.
- On occasions, some staff do not adapt the delivery of the curriculum as successfully as they could for pupils with SEND. This means that a few pupils with SEND do not learn all that they could. Leaders should ensure that staff receive additional training to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND so that they fully address these pupils' additional learning needs.

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	105818
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10255970
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	456
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Margaret Hyde
Headteacher	Sarah Bollado
Website	www.stmrc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 to 19 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make any use of alternative provision.
- This Roman Catholic primary school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The last section 48 inspection took place on 6 November 2015.

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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, music and geography. For each deep dive, they met with subject leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils and looked at pupils' work. They also examined pupils' work in two other curriculum subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They met with a

range of leaders who are responsible for the school's personal development programmes.

- The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also met with a representative of the Diocese of Salford and a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector 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, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes and as they moved around the school. They scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at the school. They spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys 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
Katie Hague	Ofsted Inspector
Sharon Cliff	Ofsted Inspector

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