

Inspection of a good school: St Malachy's RC Primary School

Eggington Street, Collyhurst, Manchester M40 7RG

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 May 2023

Outcome

St Malachy's RC Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Malachy's delight in coming to a school where they learn and play happily together. The playground is full of joy and laughter. Pupils behave well and try their hardest in lessons because they know that their teachers want the best for them.

Pupils, including children in the early years, support each other and act with kindness. They know that staff will take good care of them. This helps pupils to feel safe in the school. Many pupils, parents and carers described the school as being one big family.

Pupils enjoy healthy competition through the house system. They are proud to receive house points when they meet leaders' high expectations of their behaviour and learning. They celebrate graciously when their classmates are successful in the many sporting activities that leaders provide. Leaders ensure that no-one is left out of these.

Pupils learn about the importance of tolerance and respect. This helps them to be considerate of everyone's differences. They told the inspector that everyone is equal here and that leaders do not allow bullying. Staff deal quickly and well with unkind behaviour.

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

Leaders have successfully ensured that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from a high-quality education. Pupils achieve well. Disadvantaged pupils achieve particularly highly.

In most subjects, the curriculum is well organised. Subject leaders have thought carefully about the most important knowledge that pupils should acquire. They have broken this knowledge down into smaller steps that build from the Nursery Year to Year 6. This helps pupils to develop their understanding over time. Children in the early years acquire a solid foundation of knowledge that prepares them well for key stage 1.

In a few subjects, leaders are still refining these small steps in learning. On occasions, this hinders teachers in designing effective learning activities. It also makes it harder for pupils to link new concepts to what they already know.

Leaders have recently introduced strategies to ensure that pupils revisit what they learned previously. These are helping pupils to remember the important knowledge in most subjects. In the subjects where the curriculum is still developing, these strategies are less effective. This is because teachers are not as clear about exactly what it is that pupils need to remember.

In the main, teachers implement the curriculum very effectively. Their subject expertise helps them to explain new ideas clearly. Teachers are quick to identify and address pupils' misconceptions.

Leaders have a thorough understanding of pupils' needs. From the very beginning of the Nursery Year, they carefully identify any children who may have SEND. This helps staff to support these children as soon as they need it. Pupils with SEND learn well alongside their peers. They make good progress from their starting points.

Leaders have introduced a wide range of strategies to encourage pupils' love of reading. Pupils in all year groups read regularly, both at school and at home. Their reading confidence grows as they move through the school.

From the start of the Nursery class, children develop their awareness of sounds and letters. This provides a strong start to their phonics learning in the Reception Year. Most pupils read accurately by the end of key stage 1. This contributes well to their achievement in other subjects. Any pupils who fall behind, including older pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge, receive skilful support from staff, so that they can catch up quickly.

Children in the early years learn to manage their own behaviour. For example, they learn to share and to move between activities sensibly. This helps them to learn without disruption as they grow older. Pupils in Year 6 become role models. They take on many responsibilities such as supporting their younger peers as nursery helpers and sports leaders.

Leaders have ensured that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They provide opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral and cultural awareness. For example, pupils participate in church services, visit the theatre and compete in national debating events. In assemblies, they are proud to share their talents, interests and cultural heritage with their peers. They learn about each other's differences with respect and curiosity.

Governors work closely with leaders and staff. Staff feel valued. They are proud to be part of the school community. Teachers appreciate how leaders consider their workload. Early career teachers told the inspector how much they value the support that they receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors put pupils' welfare at the forefront of everything they do. This has created a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders have carefully identified the support that potentially vulnerable pupils and their families may need.

Staff are well trained. They are clear about the procedures that they must follow if they have concerns about a pupil. Leaders act promptly on these concerns. They work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils get additional help when they need it. Leaders follow this up until they are sure that this help has been effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, leaders are still finalising their curriculum thinking. In these subjects, teachers are not sufficiently clear about the precise components of knowledge that pupils need to remember over time. As a result, sometimes they do not design appropriate learning activities. This makes it harder for pupils to build a secure body of knowledge by linking new learning to what they already know. Leaders should ensure that teachers are clear about exactly what pupils should learn and how this knowledge builds through the curriculum, so that pupils achieve well in all subjects.

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 June 2014.

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	105532
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10286231
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	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christine Robinson
Headteacher	Janine Parker
Website	www.st-malachys.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in October 2015.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and mathematics. He met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils. The inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation. He spoke to the headteacher and senior leaders throughout the inspection. He also met with the SEND coordinator.

- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke to a representative of the local authority and a diocesan representative by telephone.
- The inspector held meetings with the staff responsible for safeguarding and scrutinised the single central record. He considered leaders' safeguarding processes and procedures. He observed pupils during social times and discussed safeguarding with them.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Ben Hill, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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