

Inspection of an outstanding school: St Marie's Roman Catholic Primary School, Bury

Edward Street, The Mosses, Bury, Lancashire BL9 0RZ

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 June 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

All pupils, regardless of their race, gender or culture, receive a warm welcome at this school. Pupils, including children in the early years, arrive at school eager to learn. Staff know pupils and their families well.

Leaders want pupils to achieve well and most do across a range of subjects. Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, in some subjects, leaders are still finalising their curriculum thinking.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils are polite and they make visitors to the school feel welcome. Pupils feel safe and they share positive relationships with staff and their peers. They relish the time that they spend in the playground interacting with their friends. Pupils behave well in lessons and they move around the school in a sensible manner. Leaders deal with any instances of bullying swiftly and effectively.

There is an array of extra-curricular opportunities that afford pupils the opportunity to pursue their interests and further develop their talents. For instance, pupils enjoy learning to cook, honing their sporting skills and singing in the school choir. They are keen to take on leadership responsibilities through their roles as school councillors and eco-warriors.

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

Leaders have an accurate understanding of those aspects of the quality of education that require further development. They have thought carefully about the key knowledge that

they want pupils to acquire from the early years to Year 6. Leaders have provided guidance to teachers about the order in which this content should be delivered. This includes the subject-specific vocabulary that pupils must learn. However, in some subjects, leaders are not sufficiently clear about the order in which key vocabulary should be taught. From time to time, this hinders teachers in designing learning for pupils.

Leaders have ensured that staff have the skills and expertise to deliver the curriculum consistently well. In lessons, teachers explain new concepts clearly. They check that pupils understand what has been taught before moving on to more complex learning. In lessons, pupils have many opportunities to share their thoughts and ideas. They listen attentively in class and poor behaviour rarely disrupts learning.

In subjects such as English and mathematics, leaders use assessment information well to give them a secure understanding of how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. Leaders are in the process of ensuring that they are suitably informed about how well pupils are learning in subjects across the wider curriculum.

A love of reading permeates the school. Children in the early years, including those with SEND, are introduced to the joys of stories, rhymes and poems as soon as they start in the Nursery class. The early years is a hive of activity and there is a real buzz of conversation as children learn the curriculum.

Well-trained staff deliver the school's phonics programme effectively. The books that pupils read, including those with SEND, are carefully matched to their phonics knowledge. Leaders make sure that those pupils who struggle with reading get the help and support that they need to catch up quickly. Older pupils are keen readers. They talk confidently about their favourite authors and the different types of books that they enjoy.

Leaders identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND quickly. Teachers make suitable adaptations as to how they deliver the curriculum to ensure that pupils with SEND learn well alongside their friends in class. Pupils with SEND enjoy all aspects of school life.

Pupils are becoming responsible citizens. For example, they recognise the need to protect the planet by recycling rubbish and turning off lights to save electricity. Pupils understand and appreciate differences, such as types of families that are different to their own. They recognise the importance of eating healthy food and taking regular exercise to maintain their own physical health. Pupils' mental and emotional needs are met well by staff.

Governors are proud of the school. However, many governors are new to their roles and do not have a secure enough understanding of the school's strengths and leaders' priorities for development. Consequently, they are not able to offer sufficient support and challenge to leaders.

Staff work well as a team. They appreciate all that leaders do to ensure they have an acceptable work-life balance. Staff value leaders' efforts to consider their well-being. Many parents and carers are delighted with the quality of education that their children receive at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders, governors and staff understand that they have a responsibility to keep pupils safe. All staff have completed relevant safeguarding training. They are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect. Staff understand the procedures that they must follow if they have concerns about a pupil's welfare.

Leaders work well with other agencies to ensure that the needs of vulnerable families are met. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they understand the dangers of disclosing personal information when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not given enough thought to the order in which key curriculum vocabulary should be taught. On occasions, this hinders teachers in designing learning in these subjects. Leaders should refine their curriculum thinking so that teachers are clear about the order in which pupils should learn essential subject-specific vocabulary.
- Many governors are new to their roles and do not have a secure understanding of what leaders do well and what they need to improve further. As a result, they do not have the knowledge or skills to support and challenge leaders as well as they could. Leaders and governors should ensure that newly appointed governors receive appropriate training to enable them to hold leaders to account effectively and contribute successfully to the work of the governing body.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in December 2016.

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	105335
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10240542
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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Adele Testa
Headteacher	Glynne McRae
Website	www.stmariesrcp.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 and 2 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed. A new chair of the governing body has also taken up their post.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is a Roman Catholic school. It was last inspected by the Diocese of Salford under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in April 2017.

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 leaders and has taken this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with governors, the headteacher and other staff.
- The inspector met with a representative of the local authority. She also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the Diocese of Salford.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and with some pupils about their

learning. She also looked at a sample of pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils read with a familiar adult. She also considered curriculums in other subjects.

- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding. She spoke with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- The inspector spoke to staff about their workload and well-being. She observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school, in class, in the dinner hall and in the outdoor play area.
- The inspector considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She spoke with parents as they brought their children to school at the start of the school day. The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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