

Inspection of St Simon's Catholic Primary School

Bosden Avenue, Hazel Grove, Stockport, Cheshire SK7 4LH

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 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 and families at St Simon's Catholic Primary School are warmly welcomed by staff every morning. Pupils, parents and carers are highly positive about the quality of education that staff provide. Many pupils comment on the strong relationships they have with staff. Pupils say that they trust staff to help them if they have any worries or concerns. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe.

Leaders expect pupils to strive to be the very best that they can be academically. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), try their best to meet the high expectations that leaders have of them. Typically, pupils learn well. This includes children in the early years, who achieve well.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They know the high standards of conduct that leaders expect of them. Pupils enjoy socialising with their friends at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They get along with each other well. Pupils comment that if bullying occurs, staff deal with it effectively.

Pupils in Year 6 take great pride in being special friends for children in Reception. This helps new children settle into school well. The interests of pupils are captured by the wide range of curriculum enhancements offered, such as yoga and outdoor learning. Pupils also enjoy representing the school in sporting competitions.

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

Overall, leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum, which prepares pupils well for the next stages of their learning. This includes the curriculum in the early years, which is also ambitious. Leaders make sure that pupils in the early years learn the important information they need to be ready for the demands of Year 1.

In most subjects, leaders have established the essential knowledge that pupils must learn. They have also established the order in which new knowledge must be delivered. In a small number of subjects, however, the curriculum content is being refined. In these remaining few subjects, leaders have not fully ensured that teachers know exactly what to teach pupils and when to teach it. Occasionally, this hinders some pupils from learning all the important information that they could.

In the main, teachers are trained to deliver the curriculum well. Typically, they make sure that the activities they select are well designed. These activities help pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.

In most curriculum areas, teachers make effective use of leaders' assessment strategies to identify where pupils have gaps in their learning. Teachers provide appropriate help for these pupils to enable them to catch up quickly. However, sometimes, teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to revisit prior

learning. Occasionally, this hinders what some pupils can remember over time. Nonetheless, pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well in most subjects.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Staff regularly share a wide range of carefully chosen texts with pupils. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to read independently in school. Older pupils talk with confidence about their favourite books and authors.

Leaders have successfully implemented a new, well-ordered phonics curriculum. Children begin to learn phonics as soon as they start school, in Reception. Well-trained staff deliver the phonics curriculum effectively. Pupils practise reading books that match the sounds they know. Teachers are quick to identify any pupils who are falling behind. They make sure that these pupils get the extra help they need to learn their phonic knowledge. The implementation of the new phonics curriculum has been successful in addressing weaknesses seen in the published 2022 phonics data. Most pupils can now read confidently and fluently by the end of key stage 1.

Leaders have made sure that there are appropriate systems in place for identifying pupils with SEND. Teachers provide pupils with SEND with the support they need to access the same curriculum as their peers. Staff communicate extensively with parents and carers of pupils with SEND.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a strong understanding of different cultures. Pupils show high levels of respect and understanding for different beliefs and opinions. They comment that one of the best things about their school is how welcome everyone feels. Pupils relish the opportunities they have to take on additional responsibilities, such as becoming play leaders and class representatives.

Children in the early years learn the school's routines well. They develop positive attitudes to learning. Typically, pupils continue to develop these positive learning behaviours throughout the rest of the school. They listen carefully and focus well in lessons. Low-level disruption is rare. When it does occur, staff deal with it effectively so that it does not affect learning in the classroom. Pupils are kind to one another and support each other to make the right choices.

Staff comment that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. They also say that they enjoy working at the school. Governors know the school well. They make frequent checks on the quality of education so that they have an accurate view of what is working well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are well trained to identify pupils who might need extra help. They report any concerns, and leaders act on these referrals swiftly. Leaders are tenacious in making sure that pupils and

families get the help they need. They seek appropriate support from external agencies.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They learn about the effects of drugs and alcohol and about how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils know who to tell if they have any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not decided the important information that pupils should learn. As a result, some teachers are not clear about what they should teach and when to teach it. This means that some pupils do not learn all that they should in these subjects. Leaders should make sure that teachers know what to teach pupils and the order they should teach it. This is so that pupils can build up a rich body of knowledge in these subjects.
- Sometimes, leaders do not make sure that pupils have the opportunity to recap and revisit prior learning. As a result, occasionally, some pupils lack confidence in remembering what they have been taught. Leaders should make sure that teachers provide pupils with opportunities to revisit prior learning so that they know more and remember more over time.

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	106127
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10289904
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	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Peter Coleing
Headteacher	Rachel Crisp
Website	www.st-simons.stockport.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Shrewsbury.
- The last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in April 2022.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The governing body manages a before- and after-school provision.

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, staff, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and a representative from the Diocese of Shrewsbury.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their learning in some other subjects.
- Inspectors talked with pupils in meetings and around the school at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- An inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. An inspector also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- An inspector looked at the documentation provided by leaders, including minutes from meetings of the governing body, the school improvement plan and school self-evaluation. Inspectors also considered a range of documentation relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. Inspectors looked at a range of documentation and spoke to leaders and staff. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about how leaders help pupils to feel safe in school.

Inspection team

Collette Mather, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Louise Smith

Ofsted Inspector

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