

Inspection of a good school: St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Fleetwood

London Street, Fleetwood, Lancashire FY7 6EU

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 May 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good 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. The inspector is recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to St Mary's Catholic Primary School. Many pupils benefit from supportive relationships with staff. They told the inspector that staff will help them when they share any worries or concerns. Leaders have effective systems in place to identify bullying. If bullying should happen, leaders deal with it quickly. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe at school.

Leaders are aspirational for pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Many pupils meet the high expectations of leaders and teachers in subjects such as mathematics and English. However, in some other subjects, leaders have not ensured that pupils achieve as well as they should.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently well. Many pupils regularly display good manners. They do their best to treat others in the same way that they would like to be treated themselves.

Pupils value the opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as being members of the school council. Through activities such as fundraising for local and national charities, they learn to understand the school value of 'working together for the good of each other'.

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

Leaders have constructed a broad and balanced curriculum across the school, which is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. They have carefully considered the knowledge that pupils need to learn in English and mathematics and the order in which this subject content needs to be taught. Teachers deliver these curriculums well. They regularly check on what pupils know and remember. When needed, teachers provide

opportunities for pupils to revisit previous learning. Consequently, pupils achieve well in these subjects.

In contrast, other areas of the curriculum, from the early years to Year 6, are at different stages of development. In some subjects, the key knowledge that pupils should learn in key stage 1 and key stage 2 has been carefully designed and organised. However, in other subjects, leaders have not developed the curriculum beyond a broad overview of what will be taught throughout the year. This makes it difficult for teachers to design learning that builds on what pupils already know. It leads to gaps in knowledge and does not prepare children in the early years well enough for their move into Year 1.

Most teachers have the subject knowledge they need to teach across the curriculum. However, the activities that some teachers design do not help pupils to learn all that they should. Some teachers are not clear about what key knowledge pupils know and remember. This hinders their ability to design learning that deepens pupils' knowledge over time. In some areas of the curriculum, pupils' learning is insecure, and they have gaps in their understanding of key knowledge and concepts.

Leaders promote a love of reading across the school. The phonics programme is delivered well in the Reception Year. Staff in the early years use their training to good effect. Children quickly begin to learn the sounds that letters represent. However, the phonics training for staff in other key stages of the school has not had the same impact. For example, some pupils are taught incorrect sounds. This hinders some pupils when learning to read. Furthermore, the books that some pupils use to practise their reading are not matched accurately to the sounds that they know. These pupils find many of the words in the books too difficult. This impacts on pupils' confidence and progress in learning to read. Nevertheless, many pupils learn to read fluently and accurately by the end of key stage 1.

Leaders have effective systems to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. They work well with external specialists to develop their provision for pupils with SEND. Staff benefit from training that covers a range of different special educational needs. This helps teachers to adapt their teaching to meet the different needs of pupils with SEND across the school. In the main, pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. However, due to the shortcomings in the full curriculum offer, their achievement is uneven.

Pupils behave well and are attentive in lessons. This allows pupils to focus on the learning activities that the teachers provide. Children in the Reception Year cooperate well with their peers and are keen to engage with the different learning opportunities. Lessons proceed without disruption.

Pupils understand that there are many different types of families in society. They benefit from a range of opportunities to learn about different cultures and celebrations. Pupils are clear that everyone should be treated with respect, regardless of their differences. Leaders ensure that older pupils develop their knowledge of managing money and that they understand the differences between needing an item or just wanting it. Pupils

benefit from opportunities to develop their talents and interests through clubs such as first aid and choir. These experiences help to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Governors and leaders are considerate of staff's workload and well-being when making decisions about policies and procedures. Staff are positive about working at the school and value the support they receive from leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff benefit from regular training that helps them to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders respond to safeguarding concerns in a timely manner. They work with other professionals and external organisations to help pupils and their families access the support they may need.

Leaders ensure that pupils take part in activities that help them to understand risks and learn to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. They understand the importance of not sharing personal information when working and playing online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not deliver the school's phonics programme as intended. Furthermore, the books that some pupils are given to practise their reading do not match the sounds that they know. This hinders how well these pupils learn to read. Leaders should ensure that all staff deliver the programme well and that pupils read books that are matched to their phonic knowledge.
- In some subjects, leaders have not considered the key knowledge that children in the early years should learn in preparation for the Year 1 curriculum. As a result, pupils are not as well prepared for the demands of Year 1 as they should be. In these subjects, leaders should specify the important knowledge that children should learn in the Reception Year to prepare them well for the key stage 1 curriculum.
- In some subjects, leaders have not identified all of the key knowledge that pupils should learn and when this will be taught. This prevents teachers from helping pupils to build on what they already know. In these subjects, leaders should ensure that there is clarity about the important knowledge pupils should learn and when this will happen.
- In some subjects, teachers have not received enough guidance on how to deliver learning activities that build pupils' knowledge. This prevents pupils from knowing more and remembering more over time. Leaders should ensure that, in these subjects, teachers receive the training they need to implement the curriculum well and enable pupils to deepen their knowledge and develop their understanding over time.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2018.

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	119623
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10269021
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Large
Headteacher	Ann Kowalska
Website	www.st-marys-fleetwood.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 and 8 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Lancaster. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in March 2020.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector completed deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. As part of the deep dives, the inspector met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, met with teachers and looked at children's and pupils' work. He also looked at the curriculum and pupils' work in some other subjects. He observed some pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.

- The inspector spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. He reviewed a range of documentation and spoke to leaders and staff. He also spoke to pupils about whether they felt safe in school.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons. He spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. He also considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's pupils' survey.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. He also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.

Inspection team

David Robinson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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