

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Scarisbrick

Hall Road, Scarisbrick, Ormskirk, Lancashire L40 9QE

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a place where the needs of everyone matters. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), feel respected and included. They grow in confidence due to the sensitive care and support that staff provide. Pupils feel part of a family. They are confident that teachers will protect them from harm.

Pupils know that there are many trusted adults to talk to if they have a worry or concern. They feel happy and safe at the school. Pupils say that bullying is unacceptable. Leaders and staff deal with such issues swiftly and successfully.

Pupils understand leaders' high expectations of their behaviour, and they make every effort to reach them. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils forge positive relationships with each other and with staff. They treat staff and one another with respect.

Pupils make the most of the extra-curricular clubs they can attend at lunchtimes and after school, such as athletics and mini sports.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' learning. However, there are some weaknesses in the curriculum design, including in the early years. Consequently, some pupils do not have secure enough foundations on which to build new learning. Occasionally, these pupils struggle to connect new topics and concepts to what they have learned previously. This hampers their achievement.

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

Leaders have recently redesigned their curriculum. They have ensured that it is broad and balanced and commensurate with the national curriculum. However, in several subjects, and in some areas of learning in the early years, the essential knowledge that pupils must learn has not been finalised, nor have leaders thought about the most logical order in which subject content should be delivered. This prevents teachers from designing learning that builds pupils' knowledge over time.

Some subject leaders have not developed the necessary expertise to check how well the new curriculums are being implemented. This means that they are not sure what is working well, nor do they know what further action they need to take to bring about further improvement.

In most areas of the curriculum, teachers explain new learning to pupils carefully. However, some teachers do not make effective checks to find out what knowledge pupils have remembered over time. This stops teachers from spotting and then addressing gaps in pupils' learning.

Leaders prioritise reading. They have high expectations for all pupils to learn to read fluently and with confidence. Children in the early years gain a strong foundation in communication and language from the start of the Nursery Year. This helps children to build their phonics knowledge successfully when they enter the Reception class and then into key stage 1. If any pupil struggles to keep up, they receive extra support from knowledgeable staff. Pupils comment that they enjoy reading. Class story times are particularly popular when teachers share well-chosen texts with pupils.

Leaders take care to assess and identify pupils with SEND. Leaders work well with external agencies to support these pupils, when required. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, and they behave well. Leaders' behaviour policy is understood by staff and pupils. Pupils avoid disrupting learning activities. They act calmly in classrooms and when moving around the school.

Leaders' provision to support pupils' personal development is a strength. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to take on leadership roles to help other pupils and staff. For example, they can become school councillors or assembly monitors. The school councillors talked enthusiastically to inspectors about their recent trip to the Houses of Parliament, which further developed their understanding of democracy.

Those responsible for governance understand the school's priorities for improvement. They are passionate about all pupils achieving well and have clear roles and responsibilities. Governors are challenging leaders to improve the quality of education for pupils.

Staff feel well supported and are proud to work at the school. They comment that leaders consider their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff receive up-to-date training in safeguarding and child protection. They are able to identify the early signs that may suggest that a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff are clear on the school's policies and procedures. Leaders work well with external agencies to provide timely support to pupils and their families.

Pupils develop a comprehensive knowledge of how to stay safe, including when online. For example, they understand how to get support from trusted adults should they have any concerns. Pupils learn about the risks that they may encounter when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In several subjects, and in the early years, leaders have not identified the essential knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember. This hinders how well some pupils learn and achieve. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking in these remaining subjects, and in the early years, so that teachers are clear about what to teach to pupils and when this should happen.
- Sometimes, teachers do not check that pupils are learning and remembering the important information that they should. This means that pupils, including some pupils with SEND, do not have secure enough foundations on which to build new learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers understand how to assess pupils' learning so that they know what pupils know and can do.
- Some leaders do not check on how well the curriculum is being implemented. This reduces some leaders' ability to determine what is working well and to identify where further improvements are needed. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders are well trained to check the delivery of the curriculum in their subject areas.

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	119683
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10255980
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	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Les Rippon
Headteacher	Mark Nolan
Website	www.stmaryscps.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	9 February 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in May 2018.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative 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 spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school. Inspectors spoke with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the diocese.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. They talked with the curriculum leaders of these subject areas. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. Inspectors considered the curriculum in other subject areas.
- Inspectors heard some pupils read.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers shared through Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. Inspectors also considered the views of staff that were shared through Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They reviewed documentation and spoke to leaders and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school, including how safe they feel. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils that were shared through Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation shared by school leaders, including the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and leaders' self-evaluation documents.

Inspection team

Andy Hunt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Hollister	Ofsted Inspector

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