

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

Market Street, Mossley, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire OL5 0ES

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 September 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They are well cared for and happy. Pupils welcome newcomers and respect the differences between themselves and others. Pupils said that they appreciate the kindness, help and guidance that they receive from staff. Children in early years settle well and enjoy learning and playing. Pupils are proud to be members of this school community.

Pupils achieve well. They are keen to reach the school's high expectations. They cooperate with one another in class and listen carefully to their teachers. Pupils take pride in their work.

Pupils strive to live up to the school's values. They develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils behave well. They relish the rewards that they receive when they go above and beyond expectations. Pupils enjoy their breaktimes and lunchtimes, when they enjoy a range of sports activities such as tag rugby, football and dodgeball.

Pupils have a range of opportunities to extend their interests and hobbies after school, such as choir, cornet club and eco-club. Pupils participate in residential trips and visits to museums, the zoo, and local religious and civic sites. These activities help to extend their learning in different subjects while strengthening their personal development and confidence.

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

The school has continued to strengthen its curriculum since the last inspection. In most subjects, it has ensured that what pupils learn has been carefully designed from the early years to Year 6. This includes identifying the specific knowledge and ambitious vocabulary that pupils need to know and understand in each year group. This enables pupils to achieve well in most subjects. Most pupils, including the children in early years, are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

In some subjects, however, the essential knowledge that pupils need to know and understand has not been well considered by the school. As a result, these curriculums do not ensure that pupils develop their knowledge in a logical way. This hinders pupils' learning.

The school ensures that most subject curriculums are delivered well. Pupils enjoy their learning and are motivated to work hard. Teachers select interesting resources and relevant reading books to help pupils to deepen their understanding of different topics. In most subjects, teachers use assessment information well to build on pupils' knowledge and address any gaps in their understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from the support provided by skilled staff. This helps these pupils to access learning. However, the school has not ensured that some teachers have the confidence and subject knowledge to deliver and then check pupils' learning consistently well. This affects pupils' progress through the curriculum in some subjects.

The school places great value on helping pupils to read accurately and fluently. Children in the Reception class learn the phonics code well. Staff deliver the phonics programme effectively. The school ensures that pupils who need extra support, including pupils with SEND, catch up and learn to read quickly. These pupils use their phonic knowledge with increasing confidence to read unfamiliar words.

Pupils are excited by stories, songs and poems. They enjoy reading a range of books and choose these from a well-stocked library. Pupils and their families attend the regular book fairs and choose both fiction and non-fiction texts. Many pupils enter the summer reading challenge.

Pupils' conduct and behaviour in and out of class are calm, orderly and respectful. Teachers are sensitive to pupils' individual needs. They help pupils, especially those in the early years, to regulate their emotions. Pupils benefit from strong support for their social and emotional well-being. For example, they have access to specially trained mental health staff, including a school counsellor.

The school ensures that pupils with SEND are identified quickly and accurately. Pupils receive appropriate specialist support and, as a result, they participate fully in school life. Staff have received training to help them support pupils with a wide range of conditions, such as autism and dyslexia.

The school has crafted a well-thought-out curriculum to support pupils' personal development. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and offline. Pupils understand their responsibilities towards their community and the environment. They regularly raise money for charitable causes. Pupils respect cultures and religions other than their own.

Governors have a good oversight of the school. They offer appropriate support and challenge to the school. Parents regularly attend helpful workshops, especially in the early years. Staff appreciate the way the school supports their well-being. The open culture contributes well to staff morale. The school has ensured that systems to support the sharing of good practice have helped to reduce the workload of staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the essential knowledge that pupils need to know and understand has not been considered by the school. This prevents some pupils from building their knowledge in a logical way. The school should ensure that the curriculums for all subjects identify the knowledge that pupils will learn and the order in which this will be taught.
- In a small number of subjects, the school has not ensured that teachers have the expertise to deliver, and then check, some aspects of the curriculum effectively. This hinders how well some pupils learn and remember the important knowledge that they should know. The school should ensure that teachers are well supported to deliver the curriculum as intended and use assessment information effectively to spot gaps in pupils' learning.

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 May 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	106254
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10291401
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	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stephen Newton
Headteacher	Irene Williams
Website	www.st-josephs.tameside.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- There is a new vice-chair of the governing body since the last inspection.
- This is a voluntary-aided Roman Catholic school in the Diocese of Salford. Its last section 48 inspection took place in December 2015. The next inspection is due during the 2025/26 academic year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and other members of staff. She met with members of the governing body, including the vice-chair of governors.
- The inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and the diocese. She also spoke with the school improvement partner.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents related to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the curriculum.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector spoke with subject leaders about their curriculum thinking, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, and met with staff and pupils to discuss learning. The inspector also spoke with leaders about their curricular thinking and use of assessments in a range of other subjects.
- The inspector heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Zarina Connolly, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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