

Inspection of St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

Wellfield Drive, Burnley, Lancashire BB12 0JD

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Bridget Loughran. This school is part of Romero Catholic Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Des Callaghan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Angela Ager.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive at school happy and ready to learn. Staff welcome them warmly into school each day. Parents and carers are positive about the school. Pupils and their parents feel well supported by staff.

Pupils want to learn and they demonstrate this willingness during lessons. They try their best. Staff manage any low-level disruption well. Pupils are calm and polite when they are moving around the school. Pupils know that staff will sort out any problems quickly. The school has appropriate systems in place to deal with bullying effectively. This helps pupils to feel safe in school.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils, including children in the early years, achieve well across the curriculum. The school encourages parents to share in pupils' successes, for example, through regular celebration assemblies.

Pupils enjoy the range of opportunities to develop their leadership skills. From as early as the Reception Year, staff encourage children and pupils to apply for positions of responsibility. Pupils take pride representing their class as members of the school council and acting as curriculum ambassadors.

Pupils understand how important it is to treat each other fairly and to respect the differences between people. Pupils are eager to embrace the ethos of the school's motto, 'love one another'.

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

The school has introduced a phonics scheme that supports staff to deliver the early reading curriculum in a logical order. With the support of the trust, the school has trained staff to deliver this programme skilfully. Pupils start learning to read as soon as they join the Reception class. Staff check that the books that pupils read match the sounds that they have learned. Staff look out for any pupils who are struggling to keep up in reading. In the main, expert staff ensure that these pupils receive additional support quickly. However, on occasion some aspects of the reading curriculum are not delivered sufficiently well. This hinders some pupils in becoming fluent readers as quickly as they could.

A strong reading culture underpins the whole curriculum. The school has chosen high-quality texts that capture pupils' imaginations. Pupils listen to stories from a wide range of authors. They are enthusiastic about reading and they understand the importance of reading widely.

The school has developed a curriculum which meets the needs and interests of pupils. The curriculum is well thought out and this helps pupils to build logically on earlier learning. Staff have strong subject knowledge and they use this to explain concepts clearly to pupils. Staff design activities which support pupils to learn the

curriculum successfully. The school has ensured that staff are well equipped to check on what pupils have learned and remembered. Staff use the information that they gain about pupils' learning to shape and hone their delivery of the curriculum. This supports pupils to make links in their learning and to deepen their understanding of concepts.

The school has appropriate systems in place to enable staff to identify the additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND receive the support they need. Staff adjust how they deliver the curriculum to ensure that they meet these pupils' needs. Pupils with SEND participate fully in all that the school has to offer.

Pupils are polite and kind to one another. For example, they hold the doors open for staff and their peers without needing adults to remind them. Pupils are confident and curious learners. Children in the early years settle into school life quickly. Routines are well established. Staff provide suitable support for the small number of pupils who, at times, struggle to manage their own behaviour. For example, in 'the potting shed', pupils learn how to manage their feelings and emotions.

Pupils take part in a range of extra-curricular activities, such as choir, dance, football, netball and laser tag. They learn how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils have a strong understanding of what it means to be fair and treat everyone equally. Pupil groups within school are keen to support many local and national charities. Nevertheless, some pupils knowledge of other cultures is less well developed than it could be.

The school has worked hard to build positive relationships with parents. For example, parents were particularly complimentary about improvements that the school has made to how they communicate with staff. These developments have ensured that parents feel better informed about their children's learning.

The trust and the local governing board are highly knowledgeable about the school. The trust has provided a range of appropriate support for the school, particularly in relation to staff training. Staff feel well supported by leaders and they enjoy working at the school. They appreciate the changes that the school has made to reduce workload and to support them to look after their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not ensured that staff are delivering all aspects of the reading curriculum sufficiently well. This hinders some pupils in becoming fluent readers

as quickly as they could. The school should ensure that staff are well equipped to support pupils to become confident and fluent readers.

- The school has not ensured that some pupils have a secure enough understanding of different cultures. This prevents these pupils from being as well prepared as they could be for life in modern Britain. The school should ensure that pupils learn about cultures that are different to their own, so that they are better prepared to take their place in a culturally diverse society.

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	148993
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10268043
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Angela Ager
CEO of the trust	Des Callaghan
Headteacher	Bridget Loughran
Website	www.st-marymagdalenesrc.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy, converted to become an academy school in May 2022. When its predecessor school, St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- St. Mary Magdalene is part of the Romero Catholic Academy Trust.
- This Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The last section 48 inspection took place in March 2016. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place before the end of 2024.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff.
- Inspectors met with the CEO, the chair of the trust board, some governors, and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the diocese and of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at a range of documentation for other subjects and spoke with the curriculum leader.
- Inspectors observed pupils read to a trusted adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during playtimes and while in lessons.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors met with parents to gather their views and opinions about the school.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff or pupils.

Inspection team

Sarah Barraclough, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Trish Merritt

Ofsted Inspector

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