

# Inspection of Mount St Joseph

Greenland Road, Bolton BL4 0HT

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Inspection dates: 24 and 25 October 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Mount St Joseph is a friendly and welcoming school. Pupils are happy to attend each day. There are strong relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils understand that staff are there to support them.

Pupils follow the school's routines and structures diligently. This helps them to manage their behaviour well in lessons and during breaktimes and lunchtimes. In the main, pupils are considerate of other people.

The school has high expectations of pupils' achievement. However, it has not ensured that the curriculum is suitably broad and ambitious for all pupils. For instance, a considerable proportion of pupils in Year 9 do not learn a modern foreign language. Furthermore, in many subjects, pupils do not recall what they have learned with ease. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

There is a myriad of opportunities to support pupils' wider development. For example, pupils can be involved in the MSJ band, school productions and they can act as members of the school council. Pupils readily learn how to take on responsibilities. Head prefects and house captains are wonderful ambassadors for the school. They lead their fellow pupils maturely and act as excellent role models.

The school supports pupils to successfully look after their own mental health. Pupils learn how to keep physically healthy. For example, during recent assemblies, pupils learned about the dangers of vaping and why it is harmful.

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

In most subjects, the school has identified what pupils need to learn and the order in which this content should be taught. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge. However, there is an unevenness in how well teachers deliver the curriculum. This hinders how well some pupils learn.

In some subjects, teachers choose appropriate activities that support pupils to build on what they already know. This helps pupils to learn well and to deepen their understanding of concepts over time. In other subjects, however, some teachers do not design learning that enables pupils to consolidate and apply their prior knowledge effectively.

The school has secure processes in place to accurately identify any additional needs that pupils may have. However, the information that teachers receive about pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is variable in its quality. This makes it difficult for some teachers to adapt their delivery of the curriculum effectively for these pupils.

The school has recently strengthened its assessment systems, particularly in key stage 3. However, in some subjects, teachers do not use assessment strategies

sufficiently well to alert them to what pupils may have forgotten. This means that some pupils have gaps in their learning that go unaddressed. Furthermore, some teachers do not routinely use assessment information well to adapt future learning. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

The school has not ensured that its approach to supporting struggling readers is effective. For example, the school's systems do not enable staff to diagnose the specific gaps in pupils' reading knowledge. Therefore, the support that staff provide for weaker readers does not help pupils to improve their reading fluency quickly enough. As a result, pupils who struggle with reading also struggle to access the wider curriculum.

The school has successfully raised attendance rates for pupils, including for those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND. Pupils understand the benefits of attending school regularly. In lessons, pupils behave well.

The school encourages parents and carers to be involved in their child's education. For instance, Year 7 parents are keen to attend a welcome mass where they can review a sample of their children's work.

The school ensures that there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to gain a rounded view of the world. For example, pupils celebrate diversity in the school community through cultural days and awareness weeks. There are lots of clubs on offer for pupils. Woven through the curriculum, the school's careers programme prepares pupils to make informed choices about their next steps.

In the main, staff told inspectors that leaders support them well with managing their workloads.

The school, including governors, does not evaluate the impact of the decisions or actions that it takes. For example, the school does not assure itself that there is equity across the curriculum for all pupils. Moreover, it has not identified the precise priorities that will have the biggest impact on improving the quality of education that pupils receive.

## **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 the curriculum is sufficiently ambitious for all pupils. This means that some pupils miss out on learning a broad range of subjects in key stage 3. The school should ensure that the curriculum is as broad and ambitious as the national curriculum for all pupils.

- The school is not adept at using reading assessment information to identify the precise gaps in pupils' reading knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not read as well as they should, and this prevents them from learning the wider curriculum successfully. The school should ensure that staff have the expertise to be able to identify and address the gaps in pupils' reading knowledge rapidly.
- In some subjects, assessment methods do not enable teachers to check well enough on what pupils have learned. This means that some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge that remain unchecked. The school should ensure that its assessment systems are designed to check whether pupils have learned the key knowledge defined in the curriculum.
- The school, including governors, does not evaluate the impact of its decisions or actions closely enough. Consequently, the school is unclear about the weaknesses in the quality of education that pupils receive. The school should ensure that it carefully monitors the impact of its actions and uses this information to better inform its school improvement priorities.

## 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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105263
<b>Local authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10289884
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	903
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Marie Mannion
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alexandra Devany
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.msj.bolton.sch.uk">www.msj.bolton.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The last section 48 inspection took place in October 2023. The next inspection is due before the end of the autumn term 2028.
- The school makes use of three registered and one unregistered alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## 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 met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with the members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, art and design, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. 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 held discussions with other subject leaders.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, school improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector held telephone conversations with representatives of the diocese and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 11 about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses and Ofsted's survey for staff. There were no responses to the Ofsted survey for pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Jenny Jones, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Dympna Woods	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Ruddy	Ofsted Inspector
Vicky Atherton	Ofsted Inspector

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