

Inspection of St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Ramsbottom

Queen Street, Ramsbottom, Bury, Lancashire BL0 9JJ

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 November 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	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 15 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and their parents and carers, were full of praise for their school. Pupils described staff as kind and supportive. They said that staff help them to resolve any worries that they may have. Pupils feel happy and safe at school.

Pupils were keen to tell inspectors about their learning. They also described with enthusiasm the many trips and other activities that they enjoy. These activities enhance pupils' learning of the curriculum. They also broaden their understanding of the wider world.

Pupils take an active part in their local community, such as singing for elderly residents or fundraising for charities. Pupils are strong advocates for equality. For example, pupil ambassadors work with other local community groups to help to improve the lives of others.

Pupils are well behaved and courteous during lessons and as they move around the school. They told inspectors that everyone is welcome at their school.

Leaders have high expectations for each pupil. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from well-tailored support. This begins in the early years where skilled staff ensure that children's individual needs are fully understood and met. Pupils across the school achieve well as a result.

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

The school has devised an interesting and ambitious curriculum that enables pupils from the Nursery Year onwards to learn well. In the majority of subjects, the school makes sure that teachers are clear about the important knowledge that pupils should learn. However, in a small number of subjects, teachers are less clear about the knowledge that pupils require for subsequent learning. On occasion, this hinders how well some pupils learn in these subjects.

In the main, staff are suitably equipped to deliver the curriculum well. This supports pupils to build successfully on what they already know. As a result, most pupils deepen their knowledge of concepts across many areas of the curriculum.

Staff are skilled at identifying and addressing misconceptions or gaps in pupils' knowledge. For example, staff in the early years adapt their delivery of the curriculum when children need additional support in some areas of learning more than others. Across the school, staff know how to identify the additional needs of, and provide effective support for, pupils with SEND.

Reading is a strength of the school. Staff are adept in supporting pupils to learn to read with fluency and accuracy. Pupils enjoy reading and being read to. The high-quality texts that the school has carefully selected capture pupils' interests and support their learning across the curriculum.

Children in the Nursery Year enjoy the rhymes, stories and songs that staff share with them. These prepare children well for learning phonics as they join the Reception Year. Pupils regularly practise how to apply their phonics knowledge to their reading. By the time that they reach the end of key stage 1, most pupils have developed secure reading knowledge. Staff ensure that those pupils who struggle with reading receive well-targeted support to catch up quickly.

Pupils' positive attitudes to school are evident in their high rates of attendance. In lessons, pupils' focus on their learning diligently and they try their best to succeed.

The school provides a wealth of opportunities to support pupils' wider development. Pupils explained that staff have taught them about the importance of looking after their own and others' well-being. For example, pupils recognise that one of the ways that they can keep emotionally well is by showing acts of kindness towards others. Pupils are happy to cooperate with staff and with each other. These attributes help pupils to be ready to make a positive contribution to society in later life.

The school has developed very strong relationships with parents. Parents and staff members spoken with were keen to describe the benefits of these close-knit relationships. Parents said that they are well equipped to support their children's learning.

Governors, together with the school, are committed to ensuring that pupils receive the support that they need to experience success.

For the most part, when making changes to the curriculum, leaders are mindful of their role in supporting staff to manage their workload. The school provides effective support to enable teachers to carry out their roles effectively.

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 small number of subjects, the school has not made sure that teachers are clear about the essential knowledge that pupils should learn. On occasion, some pupils' learning in these subjects is not as secure as it is in others. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, teachers are sufficiently informed about the important curriculum content that pupils require for future learning.

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	105343
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10242290
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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Bill McSorley
Headteacher	Emma Moncado
Website	www.stjosephs-primary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 November 2008 under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Salford. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in November 2019. It is awaiting confirmation from the diocese about its next section 48 inspection.
- The school operates a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for 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 educational 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 spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school. An inspector also spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority. She also spoke with a representative of the diocese.
- 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.
- An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and music. They spoke with the leaders of these areas of the curriculum. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- Inspectors also visited lessons and spoke with pupils about their learning in other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school. An inspector scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- An inspector visited the school's breakfast club.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lisa Whittaker

Ofsted Inspector

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