

Inspection of St Catherine's RC Primary School

School Lane, Didsbury, Manchester M20 6HS

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 November 2023

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| 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 14 years ago and was 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 enjoy attending St Catherine's. They explained that adults put them first. Pupils described a genuine sense of care between adults and themselves. Pupils feel happy and safe at this school.

Pupils are highly respectful of one another. They show courtesy and respect to the adults that they meet. Pupils have a strong moral compass and they understand what is right and wrong. The behaviour system is easily understood. Pupils are clear on how to obtain value points and can articulate why they have received these rewards.

The school has high expectations for pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils overwhelmingly rise to meet these aspirations. For example, pupils enjoy developing and enhancing their subject knowledge. They said that staff design fun and exciting learning activities. Overall, pupils achieve well and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a cultural exchange visit with other pupils from partner schools in Spain. This helps pupils to gain an insight into cultures other than their own and to develop a rich and deep understanding of language. This is greatly valued and appreciated by pupils and parents alike.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum, which typically includes the essential knowledge and skills that pupils must learn by the end of each stage of their education. Pupils with SEND have been carefully considered in the construction of the curriculum. This is to ensure that they can learn successfully alongside their peers. Overall, the school's curriculum, coupled with staff's secure subject knowledge, enables pupils, including those with SEND, to learn well.

The curriculum begins in the early years, where recent changes to what is taught have been well thought out and implemented. For example, staff design interesting and engaging learning opportunities for children, both inside and outside the classroom. These activities successfully enable children to develop their knowledge and skills across the areas of learning in the early years. Children are well prepared for future learning in Year 1 and beyond.

Across key stages 1 and 2, pupils continue to build their knowledge in a logical order. However, in one or two subjects, where the curriculum content has recently been revised, some staff are not sure of exactly what to teach and when. On occasion, this prevents a few pupils from developing the depth of subject knowledge that they could.

The school's assessment systems are well thought out in the majority of subjects. However, in those subjects that have recently been revised, some teachers do not

revisit essential knowledge, skills and vocabulary often enough. From time to time, this prevents a few pupils from committing aspects of new knowledge into their long-term memory.

The school has placed reading front and centre of the curriculum. Children learn about letters and the sounds that they represent as soon as they begin in the Reception class. Pupils practise their reading using books that are carefully matched to the sounds that they know.

Staff routinely check that pupils are keeping up with the phonics programme. If pupils struggle with reading, skilled staff provide effective support to help them catch up quickly. Although recent changes have been made to the phonics programme, staff continue to deliver phonics with considerable expertise.

The school has a strong partnership with parents and carers to continually improve pupils' reading knowledge. Staff support parents by giving them the information that they need to help their child at home with their reading. This, coupled with the school's well-designed reading curriculum, enables most pupils to become fluent readers.

The school places the development of the whole child at the heart of what it does. Leaders ensure that staff are suitably equipped to identify pupils' additional needs with accuracy. Staff know each pupil and their needs exceptionally well. This enables those pupils with SEND to achieve as well as their peers.

Pupils' talents and interests are nurtured at St Catherine's. The school enables pupils to access activities such as peripatetic music lessons, African drumming or performing locally with the school choir.

The school ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils value diversity and they celebrate difference. They are tolerant of opinions that differ from their own. Pupils are clear on the importance of democracy. They are elected to various leadership roles such as school ambassadors and school councillors. In these roles, they contribute to both the life of the school and the parish. Pupils also raise money for local and national charities.

Leaders at all levels, including governors, work in partnership to ensure that the high expectations that they have for pupils are realised. In doing this, leaders have paid close attention to the well-being and workload of staff in their decision-making about when to introduce new curriculum elements for each subject.

Staff have appreciated the introduction of a new training programme, which focuses on the specific elements of professional development that each individual member of staff needs. Staff, parents and governors are overwhelmingly positive about the open, supportive and nurturing culture of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In one or two subjects, teachers are not implementing the school's revised curriculum as intended. This prevents some pupils from developing the depth of subject knowledge of which they are capable. The school should ensure that staff are well trained to implement the new curriculum in these remaining subjects.
- In a few subjects, the school does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to revisit essential knowledge, skills and vocabulary. On occasion, this prevents some pupils from having sufficiently secure foundations on which to build new learning. In these remaining curriculum areas, the school should develop strategies to ensure that pupils embed knowledge successfully into their long-term memory.

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

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| Unique reference number | 105524 |
| Local authority | Manchester |
| Inspection number | 10242335 |
| 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 | 423 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Elizabeth Dumbill |
| Headteacher | Jessica Quiligotti |
| Website | www.st-catherines.manchester.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 8 January 2009 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Salford. Its last section 48 inspection took place in June 2023. The next section 48 inspection is scheduled to take place before 2027.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- Since the previous inspection, a new leadership team has been put into place and a new governing body has been appointed.

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 has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any ongoing impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history, music and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects. They spoke with leaders and pupils. Inspectors also reviewed samples of pupils' work in these curriculum areas.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read to a trusted adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and the diocese. She also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the view 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including that relating to behaviour and attendance. Inspectors also examined the school's self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff.

Inspection team

Sue Dymond, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ian Cooper

Ofsted Inspector

Ros Munro

Ofsted Inspector

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