

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

Clive Road, Failsworth, Manchester M35 0NW

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 December 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and children in the early years, thrive at St Mary's RC Primary School. They are happy and enjoy attending school. Pupils described the school as a caring and inclusive place. They said that everyone contributes to the close-knit learning community.

The school has high expectations for all pupils' learning. Pupils benefit from an ambitious and varied curriculum. They talk with relish about their work. They live up to the school's high academic expectations of them. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, achieve exceptionally well across the curriculum.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Lessons are focused and harmonious. The school prioritises pupils' oracy skills. Pupils learn to listen respectfully to the opinions of others. They develop the confidence to take part in class and group discussions.

Children in the early years benefit from a wide array of outdoor learning that helps to build their awareness of the wider world. The school's thoughtful organisation of leadership responsibilities enables pupils to take on many roles, such as well-being ambassadors, school chaplains and house captains. These opportunities allow pupils to contribute to the wider life of the school and to develop their leadership skills.

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

The school has designed a well-thought-out curriculum, rooted in what it knows is best for pupils. This is especially true for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. The school has thought carefully about the building blocks of knowledge that will help pupils to know and remember more.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They are adept at bringing lessons to life. Teachers' explanations are logical and clear. They order learning carefully and make links between different subjects and pupils' earlier learning. This helps pupils to apply what they already know when they are learning something new. Staff are skilled at helping pupils to use subject-specific vocabulary. Consequently, pupils use high-level language during classroom discussions.

Teachers use highly effective, research-based assessment techniques to check pupils' understanding. They identify accurately the precise knowledge that pupils know and remember. This enables teachers to quickly spot any misconceptions and address these before moving pupils on to new learning.

The school supports pupils, including those with SEND, to become confident, fluent and critical readers. Reception children get off to a flying start with their reading and are taught phonics from the outset. Pupils enjoy reading from books that are matched well to the sounds that they already know. Pupils who need extra help to keep up with the phonics programme are quickly identified and get the support that they need to catch up.

Staff swiftly identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. They skilfully adapt activities so that pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as their classmates. Pupils with SEND, and those who are disadvantaged, take part in all the school has to offer. They achieve well.

From the beginning of the early years, children learn well-established routines. This helps them to settle into school life quickly. Pupils behave with maturity and work sensibly with their friends. They socialise well at lunchtimes and enjoy the range of activities on offer to them in the playground.

The programme to support pupils' personal development prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about the importance of equality, inclusion and tolerance. For example, they develop strong respect for other faiths and cultures. The school supports pupils' emotional and mental well-being effectively. It offers a plethora of activities that spark pupils' interests, including poetry, archery and sibling clubs. However, some pupils do not access these extra-curricular and enrichment activities. This means that they miss out on opportunities to develop their wider interests and unique talents.

Governors work closely with the school to fully evaluate all aspects of the quality of education that pupils receive. They challenge and support the school effectively. Staff feel valued, and their morale is high. They are highly appreciative of the school's efforts to look after their well-being and to reduce workload. Staff feel proud to work at 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)

- Some pupils do not access extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities. This means that their interests and talents are not supported well enough. The school should help all pupils to benefit from experiences beyond the school's academic offer.

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 November 2013.

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	105727
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10294230
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	457
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Crossley
Headteacher	Mary Garvey
Website	www.st-marys.oldham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in November 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place before the end of 2026.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

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 spoke with the headteacher and other leaders and members of staff. She held a meeting with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector also spoke with representatives of the diocese and of the local authority.

- The inspector spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. The inspector also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- 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.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector reviewed the curriculum in other subjects and reviewed samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff.

Inspection team

Kate Bowker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023