

# Inspection of St Margaret Ward Catholic Primary School

Cherry Lane, Sale, Cheshire M33 4GY

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 14 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.

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

Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning at this school. They appreciate the care and nurture that staff show to them.

The school has high expectations for the achievement of all pupils. They benefit from a well-thought-out curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. They model the school's values in all that they do, for example by being kind to one another. Pupils are fully attentive in lessons. They show high levels of respect for each other and staff. At the end of Year 6, pupils leave the school as responsible individuals who are considerate of other people.

Pupils benefit from a vast array of experiences, such as visits to a nearby university and a wide choice of clubs. They thrive through many opportunities to develop their leadership skills. For example, older pupils flourish in their roles as buddies. Pupils who act as eco-warriors take their roles seriously by encouraging others to look after the environment. Pupils also raise money so that older members of the local community receive a gift at Christmas. In this way, pupils make a tangible difference to their local community.

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

The school has ensured that pupils, including children in the early years, benefit from a well-ordered and suitably ambitious curriculum. Overall, staff design activities carefully to help pupils to build new learning on their prior knowledge. Nevertheless, in some subjects and areas of learning, there has been less consideration to the subject-specific vocabulary that children and younger pupils should learn. This slows the rate at which some pupils can grasp new concepts.

The school prioritises reading. Staff make sure that children in the Nursery class are well prepared for the start of their phonics journey. The school has trained staff so that they are equipped to deliver the phonics programme well. Pupils develop a love of reading. They benefit from an enticing library that they enjoy visiting to choose books. Staff skilfully support pupils to keep up with the reading programme. As a result, most pupils become confident and fluent readers in readiness for key stage 2.

Children in the early years quickly learn to follow routines. Their behaviour is impeccable. Pupils across the school show exemplary behaviour during lessons and at playtime. Their eagerness to learn means that lessons take place without interruption. Attendance is a high priority. The school supports families remarkably well to make sure that pupils' levels of attendance are high. This includes removing any barriers that might be stopping pupils from coming to school through a strong offering of pastoral provision involving counsellors, emotional literacy support assistant and outreach worker.

Staff access high-quality training to develop their strong subject knowledge. They present new learning to pupils clearly. In most lessons, staff use assessment strategies well to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Nevertheless, in a small number of subjects, the school's approach to assessment does not support teachers to check that pupils learn the intended curriculum over time. On occasion, this prevents teachers from identifying and addressing gaps in some pupils' knowledge swiftly enough.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. Staff adapt the delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of these pupils successfully. The school works effectively with a range of external specialists, parents and carers to help pupils with SEND to achieve well.

The school makes pupils' personal development a priority. Pupils embrace the diverse range of enrichment activities on offer. For example, they are keen to take part in gardening club where they grow, harvest and cook their own produce. The school carefully tailors clubs to suit the needs and interests of all pupils, including those with SEND.

Pupils develop a profound understanding of fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law. They understand how to demonstrate these values in their daily lives. Pupils enjoy learning about different cultures and faiths, including through special events such as international evenings. Staff encourage pupils to keep themselves healthy. Pupils appreciate external experts who visit school to enhance their wider development. This enables pupils to discover and strengthen their sporting and musical talents.

Governors understand and fulfil their statutory duties well. They provide effective support and challenge to the school on the quality of education that pupils receive. Staff appreciate the consideration that the school gives to their workload when changes are introduced. This helps staff to feel valued and supported in their roles.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects and areas of learning, the school's choices of what vocabulary to teach do not always support children to know more and remember more. As a result, some pupils are not as well prepared for subsequent learning as they should be. The school should refine its curriculum thinking in these areas so that pupils are fully prepared for the next stage of learning.
- In a small number of subjects, assessment strategies do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge sufficiently well. This means that teachers do not have the

information that they need to support some pupils to learn as well as they should. The school should strengthen its assessment strategies in these subjects to ensure that gaps in pupils' learning are identified and addressed.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106359
<b>Local authority</b>	Trafford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256002
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Toone
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jason Hughes
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.smwprimary.net">www.smwprimary.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 July 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This Roman Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in November 2019. The school's next section 48 inspection is due before November 2027.
- A new headteacher and a new chair of governors have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider.

## 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 of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. They met with subject leaders and teachers. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning. The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in other subjects. They met with leaders, spoke with pupils and reviewed some pupils' work in these subjects.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- Inspectors talked with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documents relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school.
- 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 took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

### **Inspection team**

Helen Friend, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rachael Alarcon

Ofsted Inspector

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