

Inspection of St Chad's Roman Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

Balmfield Street, Cheetham, Manchester, Greater Manchester M8 0SP

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Donna Malcolm. This school is part of Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Daniel Copley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Catherine Anderson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this school. They value the warm, supportive relationships that they have with staff. Pupils told inspectors that staff 'really care' about how they feel. They know that their school is accepting of everyone and that no-one is left out.

Pupils enjoy a growing number of opportunities to be involved in school life. Older pupils show great pride when they talk about helping their younger peers, for example as reading ambassadors and playtime leaders. Pupils spoke positively about some of the recent changes at school, such as increased ways that pupils can take part in sports activities.

Pupils understand that the school has high expectations for them. They live up to these expectations by demonstrating the St Chad's values. Pupils behave well. They treat each other with kindness and respect.

The school is ambitious for all pupils. However, weaknesses in the delivery of the curriculum mean that many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not achieve as highly as they should. The trust is supporting the school to strengthen the quality of education that it provides for pupils. There is a clear understanding of what needs to improve.

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

The school is committed to providing a high-quality education for pupils. Recently, support from the trust has helped the school to implement this vision. Nevertheless, the improvements that the trust has made are uneven. Some changes are too recent to have had an impact on pupils' achievement.

The trust has helped the school to design a more ambitious curriculum. Across all subjects, it is clear what pupils should know and when they should learn it. In some subjects, and in the early years, staff have benefited from high-quality training. This has developed their subject knowledge so that they can deliver the curriculum effectively. For example, children in the Nursery and Reception classes learn well. They are increasingly well prepared for the curriculum in key stage 1.

In other subjects, despite well-designed curriculums, staff expertise is underdeveloped. The activities that some staff choose are not well matched to the knowledge that pupils should learn. This means that pupils sometimes do not learn and remember some of the important knowledge that is set out in the curriculum.

The school has made reading a priority. In the early years, staff support children to build a wide vocabulary. Overall, in the Reception Year and key stage 1, an effective phonics programme helps most pupils to read accurately. Older pupils enjoy reading books that they have chosen for themselves. However, a small number of pupils who find reading difficult do not catch up as quickly as they should. They have not had

enough practise in matching letters to the sounds that they represent. This delays how quickly pupils learn to read with fluency.

Strategies to check how well pupils are learning the curriculum are not developed. Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge, including their knowledge of phonics, due to experiencing a weaker curriculum in the past. At times, these gaps go unnoticed. This makes it difficult for staff to address pupils' missed learning. Added to this, some of the support that pupils receive to help them to catch up is not as effective as the school intends.

Recently, the school has improved how it identifies and assesses pupils with SEND. Staff receive detailed information about these pupils' additional needs. However, at times, some staff do not use this information well enough to adapt their delivery of the curriculum for these pupils. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should.

From the beginning of the Nursery Year, children quickly settle into strong routines. They learn to take turns and demonstrate good manners to their peers. Across the school, pupils are eager to learn. Most attend well. The school is working with a small number of pupils who often miss school. This includes helping their families to access support from external agencies.

The school has developed a strong programme to support pupils' personal development. This helps pupils to build independence and to learn about healthy lifestyles and different faiths. Pupils learn the importance of respecting differences between themselves and others, preparing them well for life in modern society.

Support from the trust has ensured that all levels of leadership at this school are stronger than they were in the past. Trustees have an honest view of the school. They are helping governors to be better equipped in holding the school to account.

Staff are positive about recent changes in the school. For example, they told inspectors that the school has consulted with them to ensure that their workload is more manageable than it has been in the past.

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, staff have not had sufficient support to select appropriate activities and to deliver curriculums as intended. This hinders some pupils, including those with SEND, from learning the curriculum as well as they should.

The school should ensure that staff receive appropriate guidance and support so that they deliver the curriculum consistently well.

- A small number of pupils who struggle with reading are not catching up quickly enough. This limits their success in other areas of the curriculum. The school should ensure that these pupils receive enough opportunities for accurate phonics practice, so that their reading becomes increasingly fluent as words become more familiar.
- In many subjects, and in the early years, staff do not have a thorough enough understanding of how well pupils are learning the curriculum. Staff are sometimes unaware of the gaps that pupils have developed in their knowledge. As a result, the school's strategies to address these gaps are not effective. The school should ensure that assessment strategies enable teachers to accurately identify any missed or forgotten learning and help pupils to secure that knowledge in 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

Unique reference number	148326
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10290382
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Catherine Anderson
CEO of trust	Daniel Copley
Headteacher	Donna Malcolm
Website	st-chads.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Chad's Roman Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy converted to become an academy in January 2021. When its predecessor school, St Chad's RC Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- This school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in July 2016. The next is due to take place by the end of July 2024.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2023. Since then, several other leaders and staff have also been appointed.
- Leaders do not make use of any 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 education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection 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 completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. They met with subject leaders, visited some lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils. The lead inspector also listened to pupils from years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation. They spoke with the headteacher and senior leaders throughout the inspection. An inspector also met with the SEND coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO and other executive officers of the trust.
- The lead inspector met with trustees, including the chair of the trust, and with members of the local governing body. He also spoke with representatives of the diocese and of the local authority by telephone.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Ben Hill, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lisa Littler

Ofsted Inspector

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