

Inspection of a good school: St John Fisher Roman Catholic Primary School

Stanycliffe Lane, Middleton, Manchester M24 2PB

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 February 2024

Outcome

St John Fisher Roman Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive at school smiling each morning. Staff greet them with equally big smiles. Pupils said that the positive relationships that they have with staff are one of the best things about the school. This helps them to feel happy here.

Pupils are incredibly polite. They behave sensibly and considerately as they move around the building, for example they hold doors open for each other. This consideration continues during lessons, where pupils listen respectfully to staff and to their peers. Pupils enjoy learning and try hard in all that they do. This helps them to rise to the school's high expectations of their achievement.

Pupils are rewarded for inspiring others. They learn to value kindness and they embrace opportunities to serve their community. For example, some older pupils organise games at breaktimes for children in the early years. Members of the school council take seriously the responsibility of representing their classes. Pupils are proud of these roles.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of trips and visits locally and further afield. For example, pupils in Year 6 take part in a residential trip where they enjoy a rich variety of outdoor activities. Pupils described this as 'a lifetime experience'.

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

The school provides an ambitious curriculum for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Opportunities for pupils to learn about their local area are woven through the curriculum. Pupils said that this helps them to feel proud of where they live.

The school has thought very carefully about what pupils will learn in each subject. Staff deliver the curriculum well. In most subjects, it is clear which is the most important information for pupils to know. Staff frequently revisit this learning. They adapt their delivery of the curriculum to address any misconceptions as they arise. In these subjects,

pupils learn well. However, in some other subjects, the school has not made clear which information pupils should acquire. This includes the curriculum in the early years. This lack of clarity hinders staff in designing lesson activities that emphasise important knowledge. In these subjects, some pupils do not build their learning as well as they should over time.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading. Even those who find reading more difficult are confident to read aloud. Children in the Reception class enjoy retelling their favourite stories using puppets. Pupils eagerly anticipate 'star books' afternoons, when their parents and carers are invited into school to read with them. Some pupils spoke with delight about how the books in the 'I can find myself in books' baskets reflect their own lives.

Pupils participate enthusiastically in phonics lessons. Staff are well trained to deliver the phonics programme. They provide expert support to pupils who fall behind in their reading knowledge. This helps pupils to learn to read accurately and fluently.

The school swiftly identifies any additional needs that pupils may have. In the main, staff are knowledgeable about how to help pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum. However, there is some variability in the effectiveness of this support. The school has identified this and is providing staff with additional training and guidance. This is having a positive impact in helping pupils with SEND to learn well across the curriculum.

The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. This is enhanced with carefully chosen visitors into school to inspire pupils with alternate perspectives. For example, a recent visit from an elite athlete prompted pupils to think deeply about the importance of being tolerant of others. The school is determined to raise pupils' aspirations for their future lives. To this end, pupils participate in an annual event where they meet people from a range of professions. They value this opportunity to broaden their understanding of the world of work.

Pupils are exceedingly attentive to their teachers. Even the youngest children are familiar with well-established routines that promote their positive behaviour. During lessons, pupils are alert to non-verbal cues to listen and they take pride in responding to these quickly. Pupils attend school regularly.

Pupils, staff and governors share a strong sense of pride for their school. Staff enjoy working here. They said that they support each other well. Staff appreciate that deadlines are set out in advance so that they can manage their commitments. Many governors have longstanding ties to the school. They are passionate about working with the school to continue to refine the quality of education that it provides.

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 in the early years, the school has not identified the precise knowledge that pupils should know and remember. This makes it difficult for staff to design appropriate learning activities that help pupils to learn the intended curriculum. The school should identify the specific curriculum content for pupils to acquire in these subjects so that they learn all that they should.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2018.

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	105849
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10313975
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jayne Sullivan
Headteacher	Nicole Hadfield
Website	www.st-johnfisher.rochdale.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	31 October and 1 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Roman Catholic School is in the Diocese of Salford. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was in February 2024. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in 2029.
- The school offers a breakfast club for pupils.
- 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, other leaders and staff.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. She met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed some samples of pupils'

work and spoke with staff and pupils. The inspector also looked at curriculum documentation relating to other subjects.

- The inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar member of staff. She spoke with some pupils about reading.
- The inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese. She also spoke with an educational consultant who works with the school.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes. She also visited the breakfast club.
- The inspector met with pupils to ask about their experiences of school. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector met with several groups of staff. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation documents.
- 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.

Inspection team

Sally Rix, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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