

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

Church Street, Droylsden, Manchester M43 7BR

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 February 2024

Outcome

St Mary's CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy in school. They described it as a 'hub of love'. This shows how well staff care for them. Pupils know that staff keep them safe while also empowering them to stay safe outside of school.

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are strong from the early years through to Year 6. They are kind and considerate. Pupils display impeccable manners. They are highly respectful to one another and to the adults that they have contact with. The school knows pupils' needs and supports them to behave well.

Pupils take pride in their learning. The school has a clear vision to prepare pupils for the next steps in their lives. It has high expectations for pupils' achievement. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their interests. These include a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sports, music and knitting clubs. Pupils are keen to take part as these experiences help them to discover new talents. Older pupils spoke enthusiastically about a recent residential trip.

Pupils generously help people who are less fortunate than themselves. They are proud to support the local food bank and humanitarian charities.

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

The school has developed a curriculum that is suitably ambitious for children in the early years and pupils across the rest of the school.

In the majority of subjects, the school has carefully set out the essential knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which subject content should be taught. However, in a few subjects, the important knowledge that pupils should know and remember is not as

clear. This hinders teachers from designing learning that enables pupils to build their knowledge over time.

In most subjects, teachers check that pupils have understood and remembered their learning over time. This helps pupils, including those with SEND, to make links in their learning and deepen their understanding of important concepts.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. In the early years, skilled staff prioritise the development of children's communication and language skills. For example, children benefit from purposeful conversations with staff and learn to listen attentively and respond accordingly. This helps to prepare children for the phonics programme that they learn from the beginning of the Reception Year. Staff deliver the phonics curriculum well. Pupils who find reading more difficult are supported to become confident, fluent readers. However, as pupils move beyond word reading, they do not have enough opportunities to read an ambitious range of texts. This hinders some pupils from extending their vocabulary and comprehension skills.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND quickly. Teachers adapt their delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND learn successfully alongside their peers.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that support their personal development. Pupils learn about important issues such as equality and democracy. For example, they engage in debates that help them to respect the views of other people. Their learning about different cultures and religions is enhanced by carefully considered visitors to school. This includes regular theatre opportunities.

Children in the early years and pupils across Years 1 to 6 behave well. Their respectful attitudes mean that learning is not interrupted.

The school's systematic approach to improving the quality of education has taken into account staff's workload and well-being. This means that staff feel valued and supported in their roles. Governors understand the school's priorities. They fulfil their statutory duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the important knowledge that pupils should know and remember is not clear. As a result, teachers are unsure what pupils should learn and when this should happen. This hampers some pupils from building their knowledge over time. The school should identify the essential knowledge that pupils should acquire in these

subjects so that they can build on what they know and already do.

- Beyond key stage 1, the range of texts that pupils encounter is not ambitious enough to give them the knowledge of language that they need. This means that some pupils do not develop their understanding of vocabulary or strengthen their comprehension skills. The school should ensure that pupils read a broader range of books to deepen their reading knowledge.

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 September 2014.

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	106247
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10291400
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	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Susan Marsh
Headteacher	Christopher Quinn
Website	www.stmarydroylsden.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Manchester. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in March 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place before the end of 2025.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school 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 members of staff. She met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. The inspector

also spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and reviewed a sample of pupils' work.
- 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 reviewed a range of documents, including records of governing body meetings, leaders' self-evaluation of the school and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. She considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also spoke with some parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Lisa Littler, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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