

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

St Mary's Road, Moston, Manchester, Lancashire M40 0DF

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 February 2024

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 not be as high 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 appreciate the strong sense of community that pervades this happy school. They develop warm relationships with staff and their peers. This fosters a supportive and caring environment within the school.

Pupils feel secure and confident in school. They typically behave well, treating one another with kindness and respect. Pupils know that they can rely on staff to help them to resolve any disagreements that may arise. They value the certificates and rewards that they receive in recognition of their achievements.

In some areas of the curriculum, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The school is working to address these weaknesses, including through seeking and acting on advice from external agencies. However, much of this work is in the early stages and the impact cannot yet be measured.

Pupils are proud to take on leadership roles that benefit the school and local community. The 'urban crew' ensures that pupils keep the school tidy and safe. Pupils visit local care homes to sing and to play games with the residents. They raise funds and increase awareness for a range of local, national and international causes.

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

The governing body works closely with the school. It makes regular visits and is involved in many school events. However, governors have not maintained a strong oversight of all aspects of the school's development. For example, they have not ensured that the school's curriculum covers all of the learning specified in the national curriculum. This has restricted the breadth of knowledge that older pupils develop over time.

Staff in the early years have implemented a well-designed curriculum that promotes children's learning and prepares them well for key stage 1. However, this is not the case for some subjects higher up the school. In these subjects, the school has not determined what pupils should know and remember. This makes it difficult for staff to design learning that develops and reinforces pupils' prior knowledge. In these subjects, pupils do not learn as well as they should.

Staff typically have strong subject knowledge that enables them to deliver the curriculum well. They use appropriate strategies to check on pupils' learning and provide swift support to address any misconceptions that pupils develop.

Staff gather comprehensive information about children when they join school in the early years. This enables them to provide appropriate support that helps children to settle in quickly.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. It generally provides helpful strategies to overcome barriers that could impede pupils' learning. However, at times, staff do not have sufficiently high expectations for the achievement of some pupils, including those with SEND. They do not provide suitable support to allow these pupils to access equally ambitious learning. This hinders the progress of some pupils through the curriculum.

Children in the Nursery class develop their communication and language skills through frequent encounters with stories and rhymes. They are well prepared to embark on the school's rigorous and effective phonics programme. Pupils use suitable books to regularly practise their reading at home and in school. This enables them to consolidate their phonics knowledge and increase their reading fluency. Pupils who struggle with reading get the support that they need to improve.

The school keeps pupils' attendance levels under regular review. It takes swift and effective action to intervene as soon as any pupil's attendance starts to decline. As a result, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are rarely absent from school.

Pupils typically live up to staff's high expectations for their behaviour in the classroom and around school. Pupils learn strategies that help them to recognise and control their feelings, such as anxiety or anger. This helps most pupils to manage their own behaviour well.

The school supports pupils' wider development well. It has designed a comprehensive programme of learning that covers a range of topics, including personal and online safety and the importance of health and well-being. Pupils benefit from opportunities to develop their talents, such as participating in an annual arts festival with other local schools, as well as many sports and musical activities.

Staff appreciate the steps that the school has taken to reduce unnecessary workload, for example in streamlining marking and assessment practices. They feel happy and 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)

- In one or two subjects, the curriculum is not as broad as it should be. As a result, pupils miss out on some of the important learning that they need to prepare them for their next steps. The school should ensure that pupils benefit from a comprehensive curriculum that allows them to develop their knowledge across a suitably wide range of subjects.
- In some subjects, the school has not precisely identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn. This hinders teachers in designing appropriate learning activities and makes it difficult for pupils to build on their prior knowledge. The school should ensure that teachers are clear about the knowledge that pupils should acquire in these subjects.
- At times, staff do not have sufficiently high expectations for some pupils, including those with SEND. This inhibits these pupils from achieving all that they could. The school should ensure that all pupils access the full breadth and ambition of the curriculum.
- Governors do not have sufficient oversight of some aspects of the school's work. As a result, they are unaware of some areas of weakness and the impact that these have on pupils' learning. Governors should ensure that they have the necessary expertise to support and challenge the school effectively.

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	105545
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10313968
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	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Samantha White
Headteacher	Paul Stephenson
Website	www.st-maryscofe.manchester.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Manchester. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in March 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection is due to take place by the end of 2025.
- The school does not use 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 met with senior leaders, including the headteacher, and a range of staff. The inspector also spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector met with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.

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

Inspection team

Charlotte Oles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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