

Inspection of a good school: St Sebastian's RC Primary School

Douglas Green, Salford, Greater Manchester M6 6ET

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 April 2024

Outcome

St Sebastian's RC Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending school. They build strong and trusting relationships with staff who get to know pupils and their families well. Pupils know that there is an adult that they can talk to if they have a worry or a concern. This helps them to feel safe, well cared for and happy.

Pupils enjoy studying a wide range of subjects. They are enthusiastic about their learning, and they rise to the high expectations that teachers set for their academic achievement. Most pupils achieve well.

Pupils behave with kindness and respect towards each other. They understand and celebrate difference and diversity. Pupils learn how to manage their emotions and resolve conflicts so that they can regulate their own behaviour. The school environment is calm and purposeful, so they can typically learn without interruption.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs and activities that help them to develop their social skills and confidence. For example, they take part in the school choir and the gardening club, or they enjoy reading with their school dog, Bertie.

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

The school, supported by governors, has made recent improvements to the curriculum. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are taught a broad and ambitious range of subjects. The school has been mindful of staff's workload when introducing these changes. It has supported teachers and staff with suitable training opportunities so that they have the time and resources that they need to teach the curriculum effectively and to help pupils achieve well.

In each subject, the school has ensured that teachers are clear about the knowledge that pupils must learn and the best order to teach subject content. From the early years to Year 6, pupils learn new information in a logical order and revisit topics to help them

deepen their learning. In most subjects, teachers use assessment strategies to identify and address pupils' misconceptions. However, in a few subjects, teachers do not select activities that help pupils to gain the depth of knowledge that they need before new learning is introduced. This prevents these pupils from building on their prior knowledge as well as they could.

The school has systems in place to accurately identify pupils with SEND. It works closely with other professionals to ensure that these pupils receive specialist support when it is needed. Staff adapt the delivery of the curriculum skilfully to meet pupils' additional needs.

In 2023, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was low. In part, this was due to some pupils joining the school part way through the year. These pupils did not have the time to benefit from the phonics programme. This published data does not reflect how well current pupils are building their phonics knowledge.

Staff deliver daily phonics sessions with expertise. Children in the early years benefit from daily story times that include songs and rhymes. This supports them to develop their communication skills and their awareness of sounds. Pupils access a wide range of books, and they have daily opportunities to practise reading the sounds that they are learning. Strong assessment systems and extra support sessions are in place to identify and address any gaps in pupils' reading knowledge. This is particularly beneficial to those pupils who are new to the country or who join the school midway through a year. It helps to ensure that most pupils can read at an age-appropriate level and that those who cannot are catching up quickly. That said, weaknesses in the way that phonics was taught in the past mean that for a small number of pupils, some gaps remain. This is especially true for those pupils who joined the school partway through their education.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They benefit from the clear routines and expectations that staff set for their behaviour. They settle quickly into school life and treat others with respect and politeness.

The school places a strong focus on providing pupils with a range of opportunities that enable them to succeed beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils benefit from the strong support that staff provide for their social and emotional mental health. They relish the leadership roles that they can take on to help others, for example as a digital leader or as members of the school council. They enjoy school trips and take part in school performances. This helps them to develop their independence and understanding of the world around them.

The governing body provides the school with strong support and challenge to ensure the ongoing improvement of the quality of education that pupils receive.

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, teachers do not design learning that enables pupils to develop detailed knowledge of the subject matter that is being taught. As a result, some pupils do not acquire the depth of understanding that they need to be fully prepared for new learning. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, teachers provide pupils with work that secures their knowledge and better prepares them for the next stage of their education.
- Some pupils, especially those who did not start school in the Reception Year, have gaps in their phonics knowledge. This was due to weaknesses in the previous approach to phonics teaching. The school should ensure that these pupils receive the support that they need so that they read with confidence and can access the full curriculum.

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 April 2019.

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	105963
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10337981
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	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Zoe Ogden
Headteacher	Caroline Doyle
Website	www.stsebastiansprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 April 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and several new staff have been appointed. There have been several new governor appointments, including a new chair of the governing body.
- This is a Catholic school. The last inspection under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 took place in November 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due during the academic year of 2026/27.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

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 representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.

- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector observed pupils reading with a familiar adult. The inspector also looked at samples of pupils' work from a range of other subjects.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. She met with a range of staff throughout the inspection to gather their views.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. She met with a range of pupils from different year groups to gather their views about school life. The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- 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

Amanda Downing

His Majesty's Inspector

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