

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

Heyscroft Road, Withington, Manchester M20 4UZ

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 April 2024

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are cherished at this school. They flourish from the supportive, caring relationships that they have with the staff. This helps pupils to feel happy.

The school expects the highest standards from its pupils, academically and socially. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), meet these high expectations and achieve well.

Adults have clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. From the beginning of the early years, children learn how to behave sensibly. Pupils listen carefully during lessons and are keen to learn. Throughout the school, pupils are polite and well mannered. For example, they hold doors open for adults and for each other. Pupils and adults speak kindly to one another. There is a culture of mutual respect.

Pupils benefit from the range of experiences and activities that enhance their learning beyond the academic curriculum. For example, older pupils take part in a residential visit to develop their teamwork skills. Some pupils visit different locations to learn about their historical significance. Pupils find out about the differences between themselves and others. They said that this is a school for everyone.

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

The school has designed an aspirational curriculum, which sets out the important information that pupils should learn from the Nursery Year to Year 6. Pupils make positive progress through the curriculum. By the end of Year 6, most pupils achieve well and are ready for the next stage of their education.

In most subjects, the school has identified the curriculum content that pupils should learn. This supports them in building a rich body of knowledge over time. However, in a small

number of subjects, the school has been less specific in mapping out the exact curriculum content which will enable pupils to build on and deepen their knowledge. As a result, some pupils' learning is disconnected.

In most subjects, teachers deliver the curriculum effectively, particularly when helping pupils to learn subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers routinely check that pupils are learning well. When teachers spot any gaps or misunderstandings in pupils' knowledge, teachers make appropriate adaptations to subsequent lessons. Pupils receive helpful guidance on how to improve their learning.

The school has suitable procedures in place to ensure that pupils with SEND are identified quickly. It provides highly effective support for pupils, including those with complex learning needs. This often involves working with external professionals and providing a range of therapeutic services.

The school uses a range of approaches to encourage pupils' love of reading. These include visits to the local library and opportunities for pupils to read and then perform poems to others. Pupils enjoy reading. The school ensures that they read widely and often. By the end of Year 6, many pupils are confident, fluent readers.

From the outset, children in the early years gain the knowledge that they need to become effective readers. For example, children in the Nursery Year are taught to make and hear different sounds. Children in the Reception Year start learning from the phonics programme straight away. The school has made sure that staff are skilled in delivering the phonics programme well. Pupils who struggle to read receive timely support to address gaps in their knowledge.

Throughout the school, pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning. They take great pride in the quality of their work. Pupils enjoy the recognition that they receive for demonstrating the school's 'learning powers'. The school ensures that attendance is a high priority and is everybody's responsibility. It understands the reasons behind pupils' absence and provides effective support for families to remove barriers and improve attendance. The school is successfully addressing instances of poor attendance.

The school prepares pupils for life in modern Britain successfully. It ensures that they learn about fundamental British values, including respect for people's beliefs and their individual rights. Pupils learn how to stay safe outside of school, including how to mitigate potential risks when they are online. They take on positions of responsibility, such as head pupil, house captains and leaders of faith-based groups. Older pupils act as supportive mentors to younger pupils in their roles as 'buddies'. The school helps pupils to achieve and maintain positive mental and physical health. This is enhanced through opportunities, such as outdoor learning and extra-curricular clubs in archery, sketching and basketball.

Governors understand their roles and carry out their responsibilities effectively. Staff are highly positive about the support and trust that they receive from the school. They appreciate that the school is mindful of their workload and well-being. For example, they value the dedicated time that they receive to carry out their roles and to implement new initiatives.

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 small number of subjects, the school has not clearly identified the subject content that pupils will learn. As a result, on occasion, pupils learn disconnected facts. This means that some pupils have a less secure body of knowledge as they are not able to apply their knowledge to other areas of learning. The school should map out the content that it wants pupils to learn in these subjects.

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 February 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 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	105553
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10321279
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	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sean Brennan
Headteacher	Mylene McGuire (executive headteacher) Matthew Lawrence (head of school)
Website	www.st-cuthberts.manchester.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Federation of St Cuthbert's and St Mary's.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- This Roman Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The school's most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in December 2023. Its next section 48 inspection is due before the end of the academic year in 2029.

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.
- 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 met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other school leaders. She also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, she held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with a range of pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector held discussions with pupils, including during lessons and at lunchtime.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also spoke with some parents during the inspection.
- The inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff.
- The inspector reviewed a range of school documents, including policies, improvement documents and a sample of documents for pupils with SEND. She also looked at minutes from governing body meetings, information about pupils leaving and starting school and records relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Sheena Clark, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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