

Inspection of St Mary's C of E Primary School

Wright Street, Platt Bridge, Wigan, Lancashire WN2 3NX

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 April 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this school. They follow the school values in all that they do. Pupils know that they should be 'ready, respectful and safe'. They develop strong and caring bonds with each other and with staff.

Pupils enjoy socialising with their peers during breakfast club and at lunchtimes and breaktimes. They behave well. Pupils welcome visitors into school and are respectful towards others. They play sensibly and move around school in a quiet and orderly manner.

The school has high aspirations for pupils' learning and achievement. Pupils respond positively to these expectations, which help to ensure that most pupils learn well in a range of subjects.

Pupils are active citizens. They regularly volunteer their services at a local foodbank. Each class supports a specific charitable cause. During the Easter period, pupils raised money for charity by collecting and distributing Easter eggs. They understand the importance of helping people who are less fortunate than themselves.

Pupils benefit from a range of experiences and trips. For example, some pupils recently visited a different city, where they attended a live theatre performance. All pupils look forward to well-being week, where they participate in activities such as archery and climbing. Year 6 pupils enjoy various outdoor and orienteering activities at their annual residential learning retreat.

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

The school has created a well-structured and logically ordered curriculum, which outlines precisely what pupils should learn. In most subjects, teachers deliver the curriculum effectively across the school, including in the early years. In a few subjects, where the curriculum has recently been refined, the curriculum is not delivered as consistently. In these subjects, some pupils have not acquired the secure knowledge and skills that they need to enable them to move on to new and more challenging areas of learning.

The school has provided teachers with training to support them to implement the curriculum successfully. Typically, teachers check how well pupils are learning. This helps pupils to learn from their mistakes and to improve their understanding. However, occasionally, some of the strategies that teachers use to establish how well pupils are learning lack precision. Due to this, a few pupils have gaps in their learning which are not addressed.

The school has prioritised reading. Staff have reviewed and enhanced reading materials, ensuring that an exciting range of books is available to pupils. Pupils develop their reading comprehension skills well. They have a strong appreciation of the work of different authors.

Pupils enjoy reading. They eagerly discuss their favourite books and poems. Children in the early years thoroughly enjoy story time. Typically, they listen carefully and enjoy joining in with rhymes and choruses. Children start to learn phonics as soon as they start school in the Reception Year. Staff ensure that the books that pupils read match the sounds that they already know. Staff also focus on developing pupils' confidence in reading to others. Pupils who need extra support are identified quickly. The help that pupils receive enables them to keep up with their peers and develop their fluency in reading

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) promptly. Experienced staff work with external specialists, and with parents and carers, to ensure that pupils with SEND get the support that they need. Staff are skilled at modifying curriculum materials when necessary. This helps to ensure that pupils with SEND successfully access the same curriculum as their peers.

The school's initiatives to improve pupils' attendance are effective. Pupils attend school regularly. Staff implement the school's behaviour policy fairly and consistently. Pupils behave well in class.

The school enhances pupils' personal development well. Pupils take their leadership roles seriously. Eco-warriors help to create a clean and environmentally friendly school. 'WOW' ambassadors canvas pupils' views in relation to traffic and travel to school. They also promote safe parking and road safety. Older pupils learn about budgeting and money management.

Pupils attend various clubs, including basketball, athletics, badminton and gardening. They develop their talents in sports, such as cricket, gymnastics and football. Pupils enjoy playing different musical instruments, such as the piano and the guitar. They understand fundamental British values. For instance, pupils learn to appreciate cultural diversity and to respect the rule of law. They celebrate important cultural events, including Diwali and Eid Mubarak. They know how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy.

Governors know where the school's strengths lie. They provide support and challenge to the school to continually improve. Staff appreciate the school's consideration of their well-being and workload. For example, they appreciate the time that they are given to design and develop the curriculum. Parents participate in the life of the school. They are highly positive about their children's educational and social development.

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 school has recently defined the precise knowledge that it wants pupils to learn. The curriculum is less securely embedded in these subjects than it is in others and pupils' learning is less secure. The school should ensure that staff receive the support that they need to deliver the revised areas of the curriculum effectively.
- In some subjects, the strategies used by staff to help pupils to remember more of their learning are not as effective as they could be. Due to this, pupils have not gained the knowledge and skills they need to deepen their understanding. The school should ensure that staff receive the support that they need to help them to close the gaps that some pupils have in their knowledge and skills.

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	106447
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10321308
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Catherine Cloake
Headteacher	Gillian Talbot
Website	www.saintmarys.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider.
- This Church of England school is in the Diocese of Liverpool. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was in February 2024. The next section 48 inspection is scheduled to take place before February 2029.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. They also held meetings with other staff, including those

responsible for attendance and pupils' behaviour, welfare and personal development.

- The inspectors held meetings with the leaders responsible for SEND and the provision for children in the early years.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also held telephone conversations with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, computing and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their learning in some other subjects. They spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with parents and reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They took account of responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors 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

Lenford White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Moira Loftus	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Hollister	Ofsted Inspector

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