

Inspection of St Margaret Clitherow Roman Catholic Primary School

Monkwood Lane, (Off Monkwood Way), Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG2 8QJ

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 eleven years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They respond well to the high expectations of staff. The school runs trips that broaden pupils' horizons in every year group, including Nursery. Pupils strive to do their best and achieve well.

Pupils are extremely kind and caring. They frequently give up their free time to help each other. For example, Year 6 librarians happily spend their lunchtime helping younger pupils to read. The eco-group proudly develop the school's grounds.

Lessons are free from disruption and lunchtimes are a buzz of happy and harmonious play.

The school is very effective in ensuring all pupils feel welcome and included. Staff go out of their way to ensure there are no barriers to any pupil participating in clubs. Most pupils attend a wide range of clubs that extend their interests. This means all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can fully explore and develop their talents.

Pupils learn how to help people less fortunate than themselves. They support charities, such as by packaging up food and clothing for a charity in Uganda. They make meaningful decisions about how to spend the money they raise for charities.

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

The school has set out clearly what knowledge pupils need and when they need to learn it. As a result, teachers know precisely what they need to teach across the curriculum. This includes key vocabulary pupils need to learn so that they can deepen their understanding. However, in a small number of subjects, the curriculum plans are still very new or still being refined. In these cases, staff are still getting used to these changes or they have yet to be implemented in full. This means for some pupils they do not have all the detailed knowledge needed for the next stage of their learning, in these few subjects. This includes children moving from Reception to Year 1.

Teachers are skilled at checking pupils' understanding and revisiting recent learning. As a result, most pupils remember well what they have been taught across different subjects. However, some pupils struggle with understanding some wider concepts due to not fully making connections with prior learning from previous years. In the early years, staff have developed highly positive relationships with the children. This means they know the children's particular needs so can identify and fill any gaps in knowledge effectively.

The school teaches early reading well. Staff are trained to use reading resources effectively and consistently to ensure all pupils are confident at recognising the sounds they need to know by the end of Year 1. Staff make sure that the books pupils read are closely matched to the sounds they have learned. If pupils fall

behind, staff use their expertise to help pupils catch-up straight away. Children in Reception are particularly enthusiastic about reading, showing a sense of joy during 'phonics time.' Pupils become fluent and capable readers.

The school has established efficient systems for the early identification of pupils with SEND. Staff work closely with parents from early years onwards to put in timely support for pupils with SEND. Staff provide pupils with SEND with precise support. As a result, these pupils meet their specific targets successfully.

A detailed and comprehensive personal development curriculum ensures pupils are taught fundamental information, such as how to treat others and how to stay safe. Older pupils relish the opportunities they are given, such as helping younger pupils with reading and with times tables, or leading Rosary in the prayer garden. Pupils make great contributions beyond the school gates. The 'Youth Leadership Team', for instance, inspired a town wide litter picking competition. As a result, pupils understand about respect, empathy and being responsible citizens. They appreciate their own faith and that of others.

Leaders, governors, staff and pupils work well together. They each contribute to making this a happy, pleasant place to learn. Governors provide appropriate challenge and support and ensure the school meets its statutory obligations.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some aspects of the curriculum are still in the process of being updated or at the early stages of being implemented. As a result, pupils' knowledge in these few subjects is not yet as detailed as it should be. Leaders should continue to refine these aspects of the curriculum so that pupils build an in-depth knowledge of all subject areas over time. This includes ensuring that children in the early years are fully prepared for all subjects in Year 1.

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	117474
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10323652
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	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sally Curtis
Headteacher	Carmela Puccio
Website	www.clitherow.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 and 21 March 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative education providers.
- The school has a Roman Catholic religious character. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place on 3 October 2018. The next inspection will be within eight school years.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and teachers, a representative from the Archdiocese of Westminster, a representative from the local authority and three members of the governing body, including the chair.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and history. For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, attendance records, behaviour records and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during their lessons and free time.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils and staff and reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys of their views. Inspectors also reviewed the responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Cindy Impey Ofsted Inspector

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