

Inspection of St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School

Buller Avenue, Penwortham, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9QQ

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thoroughly enjoy attending this happy school. Children in the early years are supported well to settle quickly when they join the school. Pupils appreciate the caring relationships that they forge with staff and with each other.

Pupils listen carefully in lessons and are polite and respectful to each other. They understand and follow the school rules.

The school has raised its expectations for what pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), should achieve. It has made changes to the curriculum to improve how well pupils learn. However, many of these changes are at an early stage of development and are not fully implemented. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should across the curriculum.

Pupils have many opportunities to broaden their experiences through a variety of trips and activities. They value helping to care for others. For instance, looking after the recently hatched chick in the early years. Pupils are proud to take on roles of responsibility, such as being well-being ambassadors or buddies for younger children.

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

The school has taken positive steps to develop the breadth and depth of the curriculum. In some subjects, and in the early years, the school has identified the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. It has broken this down into logical steps. However, in some subjects, the curriculum content, and the order in which it should be taught, has not been finalised. This does not help teachers to plan and deliver an ambitious curriculum.

There is variability in the delivery of the curriculum. For example, in some subjects, pupils are taught new content that does not link to previous or future learning. Consequently, pupils are not given opportunities to build on their learning effectively and they struggle to remember what they have been taught in these curriculums.

The school does not have a clear understanding of the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning. In English and mathematics, there are assessment systems in place to check how securely pupils learn the curriculum. However, these checks on learning are not in place in most other subjects. While teachers do pose questions and carry out quizzes, these do not precisely check whether pupils have secured the intended knowledge. Furthermore, pupils' misconceptions are not consistently identified and addressed. As a result, pupils' learning is not secure.

The school prioritises teaching pupils to read from the moment that they join the school. The books which pupils read are carefully selected to ensure that they match the sounds that pupils know. Staff deliver the phonics programme well and provide targeted, timely support to pupils who find reading difficult. The 2023 published

data shows that the number of pupils who met the expected standard for reading in key stage 1 was low. This cohort of pupils had not accessed the school's current phonics programme. These pupils are now being supported well, through the revised curriculum, to secure their phonics knowledge.

The school engages with other professionals to ensure that the additional needs of pupils with SEND are promptly and accurately identified. Staff understand the specific needs of pupils, including children in the early years. They make careful adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum to ensure that pupils with SEND can successfully access the same learning as their peers.

Pupils behave well in lessons and move around the school in a calm and orderly manner. Children in the early years quickly learn how to follow the school's routines. Staff understand how to positively manage pupils' behaviour. They use consistent, nurturing strategies to support pupils who struggle to regulate their emotions.

Pupils, including those with SEND, have opportunities to develop their talents through attending a range of extra-curricular activities. This includes music, singing and a range of sports clubs. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is delivered well and is woven into the wider school life. This is adapted where needed in response to the experiences and needs of pupils.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They are confident that the school is considerate of their well-being. For example, governors and leaders fully considered the impact on staff's workload when making decisions about the curriculum. Governors provide support and challenge to the school. They check the impact of the school's work towards improving the quality of education for pupils.

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, the school has not finalised the identification and order of key knowledge that pupils should learn from the early years to Year 6. This means that teachers do not have the guidance that they need to deliver these subject curriculums well. The school should ensure that the knowledge that pupils should learn and when this should be taught are clear across all subject curriculums.
- The curriculum in some subjects is not implemented consistently well to enable pupils to make connections with, and to build on, prior knowledge. Consequently, in those subjects, pupils do not understand and retain key knowledge sufficiently well. The school should ensure that subject curriculums are implemented as the school intends so that pupils develop a rich and secure body of knowledge.

- In many subjects, the school does not have assessment systems in place to check whether pupils have learned the intended curriculum knowledge. As a result, it is difficult for staff to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge, or for leaders to accurately evaluate the effectiveness of subject curriculums on pupils' learning. The school should ensure that assessment strategies support teachers and leaders to address any gaps in pupils' learning so that pupils build on their knowledge securely over time.

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 | 119638 |
| Local authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 10321373 |
| 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 | 217 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | John Brennan |
| Headteacher | Claire McKinnon |
| Website | www.st-marymagdalen.lancs.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 14 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- There is a new headteacher since the previous inspection.
- There have been changes to the chair of governors since the previous inspection.
- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in February 2020. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in 2025.
- A nursery class has been added to the school since the previous inspection.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- The school operates a breakfast club and an after-school club.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders, governors, and a range of staff at the school. The lead inspector spoke with representatives from the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, history and English, including early reading. 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. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a known adult.
- Inspectors visited the breakfast club and observed pupils at breaktime, lunchtime and when moving around the school.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers on the playground and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views about school life.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including those related to the governance of the school.

Inspection team

Liz Dayton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sandra Hamilton

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024