

Inspection of St Mark's RC Primary School

Queensway, Clifton, Swinton, Manchester M27 8QE

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 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 enjoy coming to this happy and caring school. They have positive relationships with staff. Pupils appreciate how well cared for they are by kind and nurturing staff. This helps pupils to feel safe in school.

Children in the early years, and pupils across the school, are polite and well mannered. They behave well. Classrooms are typically calm and purposeful. Pupils work hard. They are attentive to their teachers and they try their best during lessons.

The school is highly ambitious for pupils' achievement. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), live up to these aspirations. They mostly achieve well across a broad range of subjects.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of trips and clubs that help them to develop their individual talents and interests. For example, older pupils spoke excitedly about participating in an upcoming dance festival.

Pupils are proud of the positive contribution that they make to school life. They spoke enthusiastically about the many responsibilities that they enjoy. These responsibilities include taking on roles as prefects, young leaders and house captains. Pupils value the opportunities that they have to raise funds for local and national charities.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum which meets the needs of pupils well. The content pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it has been clearly pinpointed from the early years to the end of Year 6.

In most subjects, teachers have been well trained to deliver curriculum content effectively. They check that pupils' understanding is secure before introducing new learning. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to revisit and practise what they have previously learned in these subjects. This helps them to know more and remember more over time. Pupils typically achieve well in these subjects.

In a small number of subjects, pupils have fewer opportunities to link new learning with earlier knowledge. From time to time, this affects some pupils' ability to recall and build on what they know already. Pupils' knowledge in these subjects is not as secure as it is in others.

The school has made sure that pupils develop a love of reading from an early age. In the Nursery class, children have many opportunities to listen to stories and rhymes. The school has implemented an effective phonics curriculum which begins in the Reception class. Teachers in the early years and in key stage 1 skilfully build pupils' phonics knowledge. They make sure that pupils read books that are carefully

matched to their phonics knowledge. Teachers quickly spot any pupils who may not be keeping up with the pace of the phonics programme. Staff support these pupils to catch up with the reading curriculum quickly. They read well.

Older pupils spoke enthusiastically about the books that they had read and enjoyed. They are confident readers. They read with expression and fluency.

The school has designed effective systems to identify the specific needs of pupils with SEND at the earliest opportunity. Staff ensure that pupils learn the same content as their peers through suitable adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum. Overall, pupils with SEND achieve well. They participate in all aspects of school life.

Pupils' conduct contributes towards the school's purposeful learning environment. Children in the early years develop a love of learning and concentrate for sustained periods. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 have positive attitudes to their work. They rarely disturb the learning of their peers. The school works successfully with families to promote attendance and punctuality. Pupils attend school regularly and on time.

The school has developed an effective programme to support pupils' personal development. It makes sure that pupils learn about a range of important issues, such as equality and diversity. Pupils understand that there are different ways to look after their health and emotional well-being, for example through meditation and other activities. Pupils learn about fundamental British values such as democracy by voting for their classmates to take on leadership roles. They also learn about the rule of law in action by visiting the law courts.

Governors perform their roles well. They know the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Staff enjoy working at the school. They are well supported to fulfil their roles effectively. For example, the school provides additional time for staff to prepare for staff meetings. This supports their well-being and workload.

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, teachers do not support pupils to recap and recall previous learning as effectively as they do in other subjects. From time to time, this makes it difficult for some pupils to build securely on what they know already. The school should ensure that in these subjects, teachers are supported to design learning that helps pupils build their knowledge more effectively.

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	105956
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10347996
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	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Vikki Allen
Headteacher	Emma Woodruff
Website	www.st-marks-clifton.salford.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school manages its own breakfast and after-school care club.
- The headteacher was appointed in May 2024. An acting deputy headteacher has also been appointed.
- Several other new staff have been appointed since the last inspection.
- This school is a Roman Catholic school in the Diocese of Salford. The last section 48 inspection of schools with a religious character took place in May 2018. The next section 48 inspection is expected during the 2025/26 academic year.

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 spoke with the headteacher and with other leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with the chair of governors and other members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector also spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. They talked with curriculum leaders of these subject areas. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and spoke with pupils. They also observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in some other subjects. They met with leaders of these subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school. They also observed pupils at the breakfast club and while they played outside at playtime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also met with parents and carers before school.
- They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils. There were no responses to the online staff survey.

Inspection team

Ian Shackleton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Rachel Pars

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