

Inspection of St Martin's CofE Junior Infant and Nursery School

St Martin's Road, Fitton Hill, Oldham, Lancashire OL8 2PY

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since March 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is centred on the compassionate, warm relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils are treated with respect and care. They are celebrated for their individuality. The school's 'SHINE' values permeate the nurturing environment. Pupils happily say that they 'just love shining, because that is what this school is about'.

Throughout the school, pupils are polite and charismatic. Many live up to the school's high expectations for behaving kindly and responsibly. From the beginning of the Nursery Year, children are enthused and engaged in their learning. Pupils welcome visitors readily. They are extremely proud of their school.

The school places great emphasis on academic success for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It strives for pupils to value their education, and it ensures that pupils benefit from the school's educational offer. Most pupils achieve well.

The school has created a programme for personal development which goes beyond the expected. Pupils learn how to become positive, responsible citizens. They benefit from a broad range of carefully considered experiences. The school fosters pupils' talents and interests through the wide variety of clubs, visits and experiences that it offers. Pupils' well-being is of extremely high importance.

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

The school has established a curriculum which is taught from the beginning of the Nursery Year to the end of Year 6. The content is carefully set out to enable pupils to learn more over time. From typically low starting points, pupils progress well through the curriculum.

Subject leadership is well established. Staff have the requisite information to know what curriculum content to deliver and when to do so.

In the main, staff deliver the curriculum effectively. They routinely check that pupils are learning the important knowledge set out. Many pupils learn well, applying their secure subject knowledge to deepen their learning. On occasion though, staff's chosen teaching methods do not help pupils to learn as well as they could. Where this happens, a small number of pupils make avoidable errors in their work. Likewise, while subject-specific vocabulary has been mapped out, sometimes pupils are not helped to develop their spoken language as well as they could. This means that some pupils are not able to articulate and extend their learning.

Staff quickly support pupils in rectifying mistakes so that they do not carry long-term misunderstandings. Staff use effective strategies to quickly check pupils' understanding and support those who may need some additional help.

The school celebrates reading. Pupils enjoy selecting books from the school's wide range

of texts written by different authors, showcasing a diverse society. Children swiftly gain the knowledge and skills that they need to become fluent and confident readers. From the outset, children in the Nursery Year practise pre-reading skills such as learning to hear and make sounds and listening to rhyme. This prepares them well for learning to read from the start of the Reception Year. Any pupils who find learning to read difficult are supported well by trained members of staff.

The school has effective approaches for identifying pupils with SEND. Pupils are skilfully supported, both emotionally and academically. They are involved in the full life of the school.

Attendance at school is a high priority. The school is tenacious in supporting families to strengthen attendance. As a result, the number of pupils who are persistently absent has significantly reduced in recent years.

Behaviour around the school is typically calm and orderly. Children in the early years are cooperative and play sensibly together. Many older pupils model the school's behaviour expectations to others. This is particularly true for Year 6 pupils as they are awarded 'SHINE' bands in recognition of their embodiment of the school values.

The school is highly aspirational for pupils' future success. It is passionate about helping pupils to develop a positive self-image and a strong sense of self-belief. Pupils learn about a wealth of topics to help prepare them for life in modern Britain. Themes include positive mental and physical health, financial safety and learning about different cultures and beliefs. The school routinely seeks and actions pupils' opinions, For example by running an electronic music club following interest expressed by pupils. Pupils are encouraged to be active members of their community. A range of exciting trips and visits help to bring the learning to life.

Governors know the school well and are effective in the support and challenge that they provide. Staff are positive about the help that they receive in managing any initiatives that may impact their 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, staff are not implementing the curriculum as precisely or clearly as it is intended. This prevents some pupils from developing the depth of subject knowledge and independence in learning of which they are capable. The school should ensure that it develops staff expertise in teaching approaches to deliver the curriculum consistently and effectively.

- On occasion, the school's approach to embedding and utilising vocabulary is not as effective as it could be. This means that some pupils, and children in the early years, do not develop their oracy skills as well as the school intends. The school should ensure that it prioritises developing pupils' oracy knowledge and skills to enable pupils to articulate and extend their learning.

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	105703
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10313971
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	Anne Ostmeier
Headteacher	Helen Woodward
Website	www.st-martinsoldham.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 March 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The headteacher has responsibility for this school and for one other.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school provides a breakfast club.
- This is a Church of England school. It is part of the Diocese of Manchester.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in October 2019. Its next section 48 inspection is due before October 2027.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 school leaders and staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors 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. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector heard some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- No pupils responded to Ofsted's online survey for pupils. Inspectors spoke with pupils during meetings and lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. An inspector also visited the breakfast club.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also spoke with some parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including school policies, school improvement documents, records of support for families and a sample of documents for pupils with SEND. Inspectors also looked at minutes from local governing body meetings, information about pupils leaving and starting school and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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' interest first.

Inspection team

Sheena Clark, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Joan Grant

Ofsted Inspector

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