

Inspection of St Marie's Roman Catholic Primary School, Bury

Edward Street, The Mosses, Bury, Lancashire BL9 0RZ

Inspection dates:	5 and 6 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and proud to be part of this warm and nurturing school. They have a strong sense of belonging and settle in remarkably quickly. Pupils told inspectors that everybody is welcome. They embrace and celebrate the many differences that exist between themselves and others, knowing that 'it is the right thing to do'.

The school has created a culture of high expectations for pupils' achievement, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and for those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils typically achieve well. They are eager to earn recognition for their efforts and strive to meet the school's bronze, silver and gold milestones.

Pupils behave exceptionally well during lessons and at social times. They appreciate the vast array of equipment and activities that are available to them outdoors. Pupils have exemplary attitudes towards school life. They thoroughly understand the importance of following the school's rules, 'to be kind, careful and determined', in school and beyond.

The school provides pupils with an extensive range of experiences that broaden their horizons. For example, pupils learn to play the flute and piano to a proficient level. They go on exciting trips to art galleries, museums, theatres, festivals and other cities. Pupils benefit from choir, sports, cookery, crafts, computing, Polish and Spanish clubs. They develop their knowledge of basic first aid and have additional swimming lessons.

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

The school has designed a broad and balanced curriculum. It has identified the knowledge that pupils should learn and the order that this should happen. The curriculum includes references to the rich history of the local area. Pupils learn well across a range of subjects. Children in the early years get off to a strong start to their education.

The school develops teachers' subject knowledge through effective training and support. Teachers typically implement subject curriculums well. For example, they provide clear explanations when introducing concepts and ideas. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding of curriculum content. However, occasionally, teachers do not choose the most suitable learning activities, particularly in subjects that the school has recently redeveloped. This limits how well some pupils learn and remember important knowledge.

Staff fully include pupils with SEND in all aspects of school life. The school identifies pupils' additional needs as early as possible. Staff work effectively with external professionals, parents and carers to enable pupils with SEND to learn well.

The school has prioritised reading and focuses sharply on fostering pupils' love of literature. The curriculum builds on diverse and high-quality texts. Books take prominence across the school, for example in well-stocked and inviting libraries, outdoor reading sheds and a book vending machine. Pupils read widely and often. Older pupils relish time spent reading to their younger peers and recommending their favourite books.

In the Nursery Year, staff immerse children in plentiful stories, songs and rhymes. This prepares children well for learning phonics at the start of the Reception Year. The school trains staff to deliver the phonics programme typically well. Pupils read from books that match their phonics knowledge. Most become confident readers. However, at times, the support from some staff for pupils who find reading difficult is not fully effective. This means that some pupils do not learn to read with fluency and accuracy as quickly as they could.

Pupils value the opinions of others. They are courteous and extremely respectful, which contributes to the calm and harmonious atmosphere that permeates through the school. Pupils know that regular attendance will help them to be successful in their future aspirations, such as in business, acting, medicine, invention and sports. Most pupils' attendance levels are high. When this is not the case, the school is persistent in helping these pupils and families to secure regular and improved attendance rates.

Pupils are distinctly proud of their contributions to the school and to the wider community. For instance, they become school councillors, play and prayer leaders, lunchtime helpers, librarians, eco-leaders, peer mediators and CARITAS ambassadors. In these roles, pupils actively support the well-being of their classmates. They also learn that they can make a positive difference beyond the school's gates, including by visiting a local care home and working with the church to improve the environment. Each class chooses a charity that resonates with them, and pupils decide how to raise money for these worthwhile causes.

The governing body supports and challenges the school well, with a shared focus on the school's quality of education and its wider work. Staff have high levels of morale. They told inspectors that the school is a 'fabulous place to work'. Staff value the school's consideration of their workload and well-being. For example, the school provides additional time for staff to fulfil their roles and consults them before implementing any changes.

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 checked that staff select the most appropriate learning activities to deliver intended curriculum content. As a result, some pupils struggle to recall their learning as well as they could. The school should support staff in designing learning that will help pupils to know and remember more.
- At times, the support for some pupils who struggle with their reading is not as effective as it could be. This slows the progress of these pupils in becoming fluent and accurate

readers. The school should ensure that staff use effective early reading strategies consistently well.

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	105335
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10321269
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	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stella Smith
Headteacher	Glynne McRae
Website	www.stmariesrcp.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, an interim chair of governors has been appointed.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- This Roman Catholic school is in the Diocese of Salford. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was in April 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place by April 2025.
- An external provider offers a before- and after-school club for pupils on the school's site. This provider has a separate registration with Ofsted on the Early Years Register.

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). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. In each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and visited a sample of lessons. They spoke with teachers and with some pupils about their learning. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils’ work. They also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult. He discussed reading with a group of older pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour during lessons and around school, including at playtime and during lunchtime. They spoke with several groups of pupils about their experiences at school and considered the responses to Ofsted’s pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school’s self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and documents pertaining to pupils’ behaviour and levels of attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also considered the responses to Ofsted’s online survey for staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors met with some parents at the start of the school day.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. Inspectors considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.

Inspection team

David Lobodzinski, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Samantha Birchall

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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