

Inspection of a good school: St Charles' RC Primary School

Emlyn Street, Moorside Road, Swinton, Manchester M27 9PD

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 February 2024

Outcome

St Charles' RC Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils said that they learn to be the best versions of themselves in this school. Parents and carers echoed this view. The school gives pupils a wealth of opportunities to grow in confidence. For example, starting in the early years, pupils deliver class assemblies in front of their parents and the whole school.

Pupils take pride in behaving well. This is reflected in the positive way that they conduct themselves in school. Pupils said that they sometimes make mistakes. When this happens, teachers help them to learn how to make better choices in the future.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They are eager to contribute during lessons. The school has raised its expectations of what pupils can achieve. It has recently strengthened the curriculum. Typically, pupils learn and achieve well.

Pupils relish opportunities to contribute to their school community. They recognise that every thoughtful action, however big or small, can make a difference. For instance, they help to clear away the chairs after assembly. Pupils delight in supporting each other. At breaktimes, older pupils volunteer to play with children in the early years. The warm relationships that develop between pupils of all ages help them to feel happy in school.

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

The school provides an engaging curriculum that is ambitious for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Classroom learning is enhanced by 'wow' days, where a rich variety of activities, including trips and visits, help to bring pupils' learning to life.

The school has taken effective action to improve the curriculum in some subjects where it was not as well developed as it should be. Staff have methodically identified and addressed any gaps in older pupils' knowledge. As a result, pupils are learning well in these subjects. Nevertheless, in a few other subjects, work to determine the important

information that pupils should acquire is ongoing. This includes the curriculum in the early years. This hinders teachers in emphasising important information. In these subjects, pupils find it more difficult to connect new learning to their existing knowledge.

Staff have secure knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They use this to explain new concepts to pupils clearly. Staff are alert to any misconceptions that pupils develop and typically act quickly to address these as they arise.

The school successfully fosters a love of reading. Each half term, pupils enjoy participating in events to promote reading, such as each classroom having a 'reading café' for them to recommend books to their friends. Older pupils become positive reading role models for their younger peers as 'buddy readers'.

Children are immersed in rhymes and songs as soon as they join the Nursery class. They learn about letters and their corresponding sounds. This prepares them well to begin to learn phonics from the start of the Reception Year. Well-trained staff deliver the phonics programme faithfully. They check that pupils are on track with their reading knowledge. Any pupils who are in danger of falling behind their peers benefit from effective support to catch up. This helps pupils to develop into confident and fluent readers.

The school has recently reviewed its provision for pupils with SEND. It has ensured that there are rigorous systems in place to identify any additional needs that pupils may have. Some actions are ongoing. For example, some of the information that staff receive about the needs of pupils with SEND is not as useful as it could be. At times, this hinders staff in providing effective support to some of these pupils.

Pupils attend school regularly. They greet staff and each other eagerly as they walk around school. Children in the early years learn to share and to take turns. Pupils are attentive and eager to contribute during lessons. This helps to make the classroom atmosphere calm and purposeful.

The school prioritises the wider development of pupils. They can discover new interests by joining a club, for example they can learn to play the ukulele. Older pupils are expected to become involved in the wider life of the school. They wear different coloured hoodies to show whether they are part of the environmental, charitable or chaplaincy groups. Pupils wear their hoodies with pride. They value these opportunities to develop their leadership skills.

Recently, new appointments have brought greater expertise to the governing body. Governors are well informed about the school. They work closely alongside the school with a sharp focus on continuing to refine the quality of education that pupils receive. Staff are happy to work here. They appreciate that tasks are prioritised so that their workload remains manageable.

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 is in the process of identifying the essential knowledge that pupils, and children in the early years, should learn. At times, this makes it difficult for staff to deliver the intended curriculum well. The school should clarify the essential knowledge that pupils should acquire so that their learning builds securely.
- The school has not ensured that staff have all the information and guidance that they need to effectively support some pupils with SEND. On occasions, this hinders staff in appropriately adapting the delivery of the curriculum for these pupils. The school should build on its work to review, evaluate and improve how well it meets the needs of these pupils.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2019.

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	105955
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10321293
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	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Phillip Royle
Headteacher	Nicola Drake
Website	stcharlesprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- 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 July 2023. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place before the end of 2028.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2023 and the chair of governors was appointed in October 2023.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. She met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed some samples of pupils'

work and spoke with staff and pupils. The inspector also looked at curriculum documentation relating to other subjects.

- The inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 and 3 read to a familiar member of staff. She spoke with some pupils about reading.
- The inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- The inspector met with pupils to ask about their experiences of school. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector met with several groups of staff. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation documents.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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.

Inspection team

Sally Rix, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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