

Inspection of St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Haslingden

Lime Road, Haslingden, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 5NP

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 July 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding 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 May 2013.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in the inspiring environment of this warm and welcoming school. They benefit from a culture of common endeavour, where everyone prizes learning. Pupils' support for one another is uncommonly strong. They are keen both to celebrate one another's success and to provide support and motivation for their peers when needed.

Pupils work hard to reach the school's high expectations and achieve very well. They benefit from many opportunities to develop their character and confidence, such as representing the school in sporting or singing competitions. Every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), contributes to the school production in a role that suits their talents.

Pupils treat one another with respect and compassion. Older pupils are exceptional role models, displaying respect, kindness and positivity. They form strong relationships with their younger peers, helping them to live up to these high standards of behaviour.

Pupils make a tangible contribution to the school community through taking on leadership roles. For example, pupils have been trained as 'reading buddies' who help younger children practise their phonics each week. Play leaders design enjoyable games and activities for their peers at lunchtime. Mathematics ambassadors help to build fellow pupils' confidence and resilience, as well as celebrate their mathematical success.

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

The school has designed an inspiring curriculum that is both broad and ambitious. It has thought carefully about how pupils' knowledge develops over time, including those pupils in the mixed-age classes. This starts in the early years, where children's learning prepares them very well for the demands of key stage 1.

The school fosters open and supportive relationships between staff at all levels. It is committed to supporting them in being the very best that they can be. Staff benefit from an extensive training programme that equips them with an impressive understanding of how pupils learn. They use this expertise to design highly effective learning that connects to what pupils already know. This allows pupils to develop a deep understanding across the curriculum.

Staff are adept at checking that pupils learn all that they intend. They swiftly address any misconceptions that pupils hold, preventing them from taking root in their long-term memory. In the early years, staff have a firm understanding of children's next steps in learning. They design activities that enable children to practise and rehearse their knowledge until it is secure.

Staff are well trained to identify and support pupils with SEND. They make effective adaptations that allow these pupils to learn in line with their peers. This allows pupils with SEND to achieve very well.

In the early years, staff are highly successful in developing children's communication and language skills. They support children in acquiring a wide range of vocabulary, including sophisticated subject-specific terms. For example, children in the early years told the inspector that they needed to use a 'palaeontologist's brush' to uncover fossils buried in the soil.

Staff expertly implement the well-embedded phonics programme. Pupils quickly learn to recognise the sounds that letters make. They regularly practise reading using books that match the sounds that they know. Staff quickly spot any pupils who struggle with reading. These pupils receive the help that they need to improve.

A love of reading permeates the school. Younger pupils regularly revisit and recreate their favourite stories and rhymes. Staff encourage older pupils to read widely and frequently. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their favourite genres and authors.

The school has high expectations of pupils' attendance and pupils are rarely absent. Nevertheless, the school maintains a close eye on attendance. It takes early and effective action to support any pupil whose attendance begins to decline.

From the early years on, pupils display exceptionally positive behaviour. They are committed to their studies and take pride in their learning. Children in the early years are highly focused. They demonstrate perseverance and determination in their learning and play.

The school has designed a far-reaching programme to support pupils' wider development. This permeates each subject curriculum so that pupils develop a well-rounded body of knowledge. For example, by encountering inspiring artists, scientists and historical figures from a range of backgrounds, pupils learn about different religions, cultures and disabilities.

The school is determined that every pupil should benefit from the impressive array of activities that enhance their learning, including trips to a castle and a museum, and a visit from a 'caveman'. Further to this, the school has mapped an impressive array of memorable 'butterfly moments' for every pupil, including fishing, skiing and caving, as well as a trip on a steam train.

The governing body works exceptionally well with the school. Governors use their substantial expertise to provide insightful challenge and support. This helps to make sure that the school provides pupils with the highest quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	119663
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10337671
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	James McMahon
Headteacher	Donna McNicoll
Website	www.st-marys-haslingden.lancs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 May 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- This Roman Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in February 2019. The school's next section 48 inspection is due to take place within the next three years.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.

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 senior leaders, including the headteacher and a range of staff. They also spoke with members of the local governing body.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the local authority and the diocese, as well as the school's independent improvement partner.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation documents, improvement plans and minutes of trust and local governing body meetings. They also reviewed records of 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' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some staff and with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to the online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Charlotte Oles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kelly Eyes

Ofsted Inspector

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