

# St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

Wood Street, Langley, Middleton, Manchester M24 5GL.

**Inspection dates** 2–3 February 2016

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- This is a rapidly improving school. The new headteacher and senior leadership team have made significant improvements since their recent appointments. They have transformed the school into a welcoming, caring and stimulating place for pupils to learn. Their passion and enthusiasm ensure that all pupils currently in the school make good progress and achieve well.
- Significant improvements have been made to the quality of teaching. As a result, the quality of the teaching in the school is now typically good.
- Children get off to a flying start to their education in the early years due to effective leadership and the caring and nurturing approach of staff.
- Teaching assistants are a valuable resource of the school. They work closely with class teachers and strive to make learning fun.
- British values such as tolerance and respect are very well promoted within the school.
- Governors are actively involved in school life and know the school well. They are kept well informed about pupils' progress and hold leaders to account for the standards achieved.
- The vast majority of parents are very positive about all aspects of the school's work. Typical comments from parents include, 'We are on a journey, a journey to excellence.'
- Pupils feel safe, are polite and are keen to talk about the part they play in the school. Standards of behaviour around the school are good.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all middle leaders are monitoring the quality of teaching or tracking pupils' progress.
- Questioning does not always challenge and deepen pupils' understanding.
- Some targets in the school development plan are not measurable to show the positive impact of recent changes.
- The most-able pupils are not consistently challenged.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve outcomes for pupils further by ensuring that :
  - the most-able pupils are consistently challenged
  - questioning always extends and deepens pupils' understanding.
  
- Strengthen leadership and management, by:
  - making sure that foundation subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects and track pupils' progress as they move through the school
  - ensuring that targets set out in the school development plan are measurable to clearly show the impact of new initiatives.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The new headteacher has a firm and resolute determination to improve the school's performance and raise standards. He is very well supported by his new senior leadership team, middle leaders and staff who share his resolve. Staff commented that they feel 'very well supported' and that he is 'pushing the school forward, at a pace'. Since his appointment there have been significant improvements in pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Frequent and rigorous checks on the quality of teaching ensure that current pupils in all year groups are now making good gains in their learning. Performance management procedures are robust. Teachers' targets are securely linked to priorities in the school development plan. However, targets set out in the school development plan are not measureable and it is difficult to show clearly the impact of new and effective initiatives.
- Poor teaching has been eradicated and there is a strong commitment to ongoing professional training, which is tailored to each member of staff's individual needs. Staff now also have regular opportunities to observe best practice within the school and at other schools within the locality.
- Literacy and numeracy coordinators provide valuable support to the headteacher and their roles are well embedded. They monitor the quality of teaching carefully and track pupils' progress as they move through the school. However, not all subject leaders do this as effectively as it should be done.
- Pupil premium funding is used very well to break down the barriers of learning for disadvantaged pupils. They are provided with support to develop many aspects of their learning and social skills. As a result, these pupils are able to be successful and be part of everything that the school has to offer.
- The physical education and sports premium is well spent. The school employs a sports coach who delivers high quality physical education lessons across the school. Pupils also enjoy a wide range of sporting activities after school and are also involved in sports competitions with other schools locally.
- A carefully planned curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. Subjects are either taught discretely or through topics which reflect pupils' interests and are linked to the National Curriculum. Pupils' learning is further enriched by numerous trips, visitors to the school, after-school clubs and special events.
- The school places strong emphasis on developing pupils' appreciation of the arts. An artist and a drama specialist regularly come into school to work with pupils. As a result, the quality of the art work around the school is inspiring and pupils also enjoy taking part in dramatic performances. Opportunities to learn to play musical instruments such as the violin, guitar and keyboard are greatly appreciated by pupils.
- British values are well promoted. Pupils told inspectors, 'We have the freedom of speech and the freedom to vote but in some countries you can't do that.' Pupils are made aware of current issues such as radicalisation and extremism through assemblies and displays. Pupils appreciate diversity and respect the views of others. Such good practice ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Most parents are supportive of the school and all that it does for their children. They comment that 'the headteacher has turned the school around in an amazing way'. They are kept well informed about the progress their children are making and consider the school website a valuable resource.
- Working with educational consultants has been pivotal in driving improvements forward at a pace. The local authority provides this school with 'light touch' support.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities with regard to protecting children from harm. Timely and effective relationships with other agencies ensures that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors are very supportive of the head teacher. They believe that through his effective leadership he has 'transformed the school'. They offer him support and challenge in equal measure. Governors have a good understanding of the progress that different groups of pupils are making and of school priorities. They undertake regular training to enhance their knowledge and skills and take an active part in school life. Finances are well managed and statutory safeguarding duties are met.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The new senior leadership team have made significant changes to the learning environment which now inspires pupils to learn. Classroom displays are now bright, informative and show clearly that a broad and balanced curriculum is being delivered throughout the school. Resources are of high quality, which significantly enhances pupils' learning experiences.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan lessons which are fun and purposeful. Planning takes into consideration the different abilities of groups of pupils. However, on occasions work set is not matched well enough to pupils' abilities, particularly the most-able. As a result, they don't always achieve as highly as they might.
- Teaching assistants are a valuable resource to the school. They work closely with the class teacher and are well deployed to support pupils in their learning and development.
- Lessons start promptly and move on at a brisk pace. This ensures that most pupils are engaged and keen to learn. Pupils work well collaboratively, discussing and sharing their ideas. For example, during a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils worked in small groups sharing with each other what they knew about bar charts and their understanding of 'tallying'.
- Not all staff use questioning well to deepen and extend pupils' learning. However, some good examples were seen during the inspection. For example, during a Year 2 literacy lesson skilful questioning was used to help pupils understand the difference between a comma and an apostrophe. In a Year 4 Science lesson, the teacher used questioning very well to develop and extend pupils' understanding of condensation.
- Pupils' progress is closely monitored during lessons, ensuring that any misconceptions are dealt with promptly and that pupils make the best possible progress in their learning.
- A new marking policy has been implemented and most teachers follow it. Pupils are provided with regular feedback and clear guidance about what they need to do to improve their work. They are set individual targets for reading, writing and mathematics and the next steps in pupils' learning are also identified.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school places strong emphasis on inspiring pupils to do their best and be successful in life. Professional people such as doctors come into school to talk to pupils and act as positive role models. Pupils typically comment, 'If I work hard at school I will go to university and be successful.'
- Key events in the school calendar such as internet day, anti-bullying week and healthy schools week help pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- Senior leaders and staff listen very closely to the views of pupils, and members of the different school councils take their responsibilities very seriously. For example, council members have been involved in the design of the new playground, the reorganisation of lunchtime routines and in revising school policies.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are unreservedly polite and well mannered. They hold doors open for each other and adults in the school. A warm welcome is provided for visitors. When the inspector entered classes, a designated pupil came up, shook the inspector's hand and welcomed her to their class. They then gave the inspector a brief overview of what the class have been studying in English and mathematics.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and teachers use these positive attitudes to help drive progress in their learning. Teachers make expectations for behaviour in the class clear. Very occasionally, when activities do not interest pupils, a few lose concentration and become fidgety.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that they feel very safe. They are very trusting of their teachers and other adults in the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying. They say that incidents of bullying are rare and they are confident that if any such incidents did occur, adults who look after them would sort them out quickly. Although a small number of parents expressed some concerns about bullying, inspection evidence showed that any such concerns are being dealt with, following appropriate procedures.

- Attendance and punctuality are now very closely monitored. Stringent procedures are in place to support pupils who are more reluctant to come to school. Workshops are provided for parents to help them understand the importance of regular attendance and the impact on learning. Those who have high levels of attendance are well rewarded. As a result of these initiatives, levels of attendance have steadily improved and are now in line with the national average.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- From their different starting points, children make good progress in the early years. Generally, children enter the early years with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. However, some children face significant challenges, particularly relating to their self-confidence, speech and language and their ability to form relationships. As a result of good teaching and the support of outside agencies, school assessment information shows that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is increasing. As a result, more children are ready for Year 1.
- Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through Key Stage 1, particularly in reading and mathematics. Progress in writing is slower, particularly for the most-able pupils.
- Published information shows that standards declined at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2015 for a number of justifiable reasons such as some weak teaching at Key Stage 2 and insecure teacher assessment of pupils' progress and achievement. Swift and effective action has been taken by the school to rectify this. As a result of significant staff changes at Key Stage 2, pupils are now making good progress and achieving well. The school's own assessment information, which is now closely checked and externally moderated, shows improvement in the number of pupils on track to reach and exceed the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics this year.
- However, work in pupils' books shows that the most-able pupils are not consistently challenged at Key Stage 2, particularly in writing and mathematics. Consequently, the learning for this group of pupils is, at times, not as rapid as it could be.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught well. Those reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2015 was broadly in line with the national average. To drive standards up further, senior leaders introduced a more structured approach to the teaching of phonics which staff have embraced and pupils enjoy. As a result, school assessment records show that standards are rising.
- Pupils are keen readers. They have access to a well-resourced school library and read regularly at home and at school. Those who read less frequently at home are well supported by staff. Senior leaders have introduced the 'green reader policy'. This promotes and fosters pupils' enjoyment of reading well through rewards.
- The progress of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs compares favourably with their classmates. This is due to timely interventions and good partnership working with outside agencies to which pupils respond positively.
- Published information and the school's own assessment records show that disadvantaged pupils and those from minority ethnic backgrounds perform as well and sometimes better than their peers. This is due to well-targeted support to ensure their differing ranges of individual needs are met.

## Early years provision

is good

- When children start in the early years, they enter a bright, colourful and well-resourced environment where they feel secure and are kept safe. There are no breaches of the statutory welfare requirements.
- The quality of teaching is good and staff work well as a team. Planning is effective and linked to the interest of the children. For example, during the inspection children were learning about bears. They were making bear masks using a variety of different media and developing mathematical skills as they poured porridge into three different-sized bowls for the bears.
- Behaviour is excellent and squabbles are rare because children are so busy. Children play cooperatively together – sharing and taking turns. Adults are calm, kind and caring.
- Children are making good progress in their communication and language skills. Inspection evidence shows that Nursery children have a growing awareness of initial sounds and are beginning to identify words that rhyme. Reception children clearly understand that a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. They also use their phonics skills to spell simple words.

- Leadership of the early years is good. Children's progress is closely monitored, ensuring that any underperformance is identified quickly and addressed. Evidence of children's achievement is collated beautifully in their 'learning journeys', which provide a clear overview of the typically good progress being made by all groups of pupils.
- Positive relationships have been established with parents. Parents contribute to children's assessments and attend 'stay and play', which ensures that they take an active part in children's learning.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105818
<b>Local authority</b>	Rochdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	10003934

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	441
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mike Suddaby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Ben Lavin
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 6437594
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmarysrcmidd.rochdale.sch.uk">www.stmarysrcmidd.rochdale.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:blavin@stmarysrcmidd.rochdale.sch.uk">blavin@stmarysrcmidd.rochdale.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 October 2010

## Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above national average. The pupil premium is funding for pupils who are, or have been, eligible for free school meals, or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- The school does not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of year 6.
- The early years provision comprises of a Nursery and two Reception classes. Children attend the Nursery class on a full and part-time basis. Children in Reception attend full time.
- The governing body runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- There have been significant staff changes since September 2014. A new headteacher has been appointed, followed shortly after by two assistant headteachers and a deputy headteacher. A number of staff have been replaced since the appointment of the new headteacher.
- The school has the following awards: Gold Arts Mark, Gold Sports Mark, Healthy Schools Enhanced, Basic Skills Award, Extended Schools Award.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across a range of subjects in each class of the school. The headteacher took part in five joint observations with inspectors.
- They also visited the breakfast club run by the school.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of pupils, listened to them read and looked at samples of their work. They also met with a group of pupils to see how they felt about the school.
- Observations were made of pupils' behaviour at the beginning of the day, breaktimes and when they were moving around the school. Pupils' behaviour was also observed in the classroom.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders and representatives of the governing body. The lead inspector held a telephone call with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance and the school's information on pupils' outcomes.
- Inspectors held a meeting with a group of parents and spoke to parents at the start of the school day. They also took account of seven responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the school's own parent questionnaire.
- Inspectors also spoke to teachers and teaching assistants to get their views on the school.

## Inspection team

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Caroline Parker	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Peach	Ofsted Inspector
Sandra La Porta	Ofsted Inspector

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