

Inspection of St Mary's CofE Junior and Infant School

Adscombe Street, Alexandra Park, Moss Side, Manchester M16 7AQ

Inspection dates: 30 April and 1 May 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 June 2009.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school are immensely proud of the diverse community of their school and of the area that they live in. From the early years onwards, pupils learn about their rights and how to respect others. This underpins their superb behaviour and their excellent attitudes towards learning.

The school has exceptionally high expectations for pupils' achievement. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those who are disadvantaged. Pupils live up to, and often exceed, these expectations. They embody the school's motto to 'be the best they can be'. This is reflected in the high quality of work that pupils produce. Pupils across the school achieve remarkably well.

Pupils at this school flourish from the supportive, caring relationships that they have with staff. Pupils are happy and they enjoy being part of the St Mary's community. The school is located in an area that faces challenging levels of youth crime. This steers a determination from pupils and staff to be active citizens who champion equality and opportunity for all. The school value, 'love thy neighbour', permeates pupils' everyday actions.

Pupils relish the extensive variety of opportunities that are on offer to them such as trips and visits that they go on to local farms, art galleries and museums. Pupils talked highly of the dance, art and football clubs that they take part in. Staff ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, have access to the abundance of extra-curricular activities available.

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

The school is extremely ambitious for pupils, including those with SEND. Pupils benefit from a well-thought-out curriculum which is carefully ordered to help them to know and remember more over time. This broad and balanced curriculum starts in the early years and flows seamlessly to Year 6.

Many school staff are specialist teachers in their field. This enables them to equip other staff with the skills that they need to design curriculum content extremely well. Added to this, the curriculum is delivered with considerable expertise. Pupils learn deeply across a broad range of subjects.

Staff routinely check that pupils have secured the knowledge that they need for their next steps of learning. Where pupils do have gaps or misconceptions in their knowledge, staff take swift action to address these. The school uses assessment information successfully to make appropriate refinements to subject curriculums. Over time, pupils develop a deep body of knowledge that interconnects between subjects. This prepares them wholeheartedly for learning beyond key stage 2.

The school has made reading a priority. Children in the Nursery class enjoy being read to and sharing stories daily. Knowledgeable staff support children to develop their communication and language skills successfully. Skilled staff deliver phonics lessons as soon as children start in the Reception Year. This ensures that children get off to the very best start possible with reading.

Pupils practise their reading using books that are carefully matched to the sounds that they already know. Staff use their expertise to check regularly that pupils are keeping up with the phonics programme. If pupils struggle with reading, staff provide effective support to help them to catch up quickly. Most pupils become confident and fluent readers by the end of Year 2. Older pupils talked confidently about their love of reading. They spoke articulately about their favourite texts and authors.

Pupils' rates of attendance are extremely high. They understand the importance of attending school each day. When needed, the school takes prompt action to reduce pupils' absence effectively. The school provides comprehensive pastoral support for pupils and families, skilling up and empowering parents and carers to also 'be the best they can be' for their children.

Staff are trained to quickly identify the additional needs that pupils may have, including SEND. To secure appropriate support for pupils, staff work collaboratively with parents and external agencies. Staff are skilled at making any necessary adaptations to their delivery of the curriculum. This enables pupils with SEND to successfully learn the same broad and exceptional curriculum as their peers.

The way that the school develops pupils' character is commendable. Pupils warmly welcome everyone into their school, regardless of any differences that they may have. The school places a high emphasis on helping pupils to prepare for life in modern Britain. It ensures that they learn about fundamental shared values, and it maximises opportunities for pupils to engage with their community. In addition to raising money for local charities, pupils learn about and meet positive role models in their community who have made a difference. These opportunities have a positive impact on pupils' aspirations.

Knowledgeable and committed governors are passionate about affording pupils as many opportunities to learn and grow as they can. Governors understand and fulfil their statutory duties exceptionally well.

Staff were overwhelmingly positive about how the school takes their workload and well-being into consideration. For example, staff value the way that the school avoids overloading them when they allocate tasks and responsibilities.

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	105495
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10256001
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	458
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lisa Bennett
Headteacher	Jenny McGarry
Website	st-marys-mossside.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 June 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England primary school within the Diocese of Manchester. The last section 48 inspection took place in July 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due in the 2026/27 academic year.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school manages a breakfast and after-school club.

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 the headteacher, other leaders and staff.

- The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography, science, and design and technology. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects. They met with leaders, spoke with pupils and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a trusted adult.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Ruth Moran, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Katie McCaughey	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Hamilton	Ofsted Inspector

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