

Inspection of a good school: St John's Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale

Ann Street, Rochdale, Lancashire OL11 1EZ

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 November 2021

Outcome

St John's Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St John's Catholic Primary School is a friendly and welcoming school. Pupils said that they are happy. They enjoy coming to school because they have lots of friends. Some pupils likened being a member of the school community to being part of a big family.

Leaders, including governors, have high aspirations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. Staff have high expectations of pupils, both in terms of their learning and their behaviour. Pupils respond to these expectations well. They display positive attitudes to their learning, and they work hard, behave sensibly and achieve well.

Pupils said that they feel safe at school because staff look after them. They know that staff will quickly deal with any rare incidents of bullying.

Pupils are proud of the work that they do to support others, for example supporting the local soup kitchen and other local charities. They enjoy the opportunities on offer beyond the school day, such as sports clubs in the 'fitness centre'. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, such as joining the school council or being an eco-councillor.

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

Leaders have developed an appropriately ambitious curriculum which ensures that pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well. This is especially the case in reading.

Leaders have placed reading at the heart of the school's curriculum. From the moment that children join the early years, staff ensure that they benefit from books and stories that spark their interest and imagination. Younger pupils practise their phonics knowledge each day. They are supported well by knowledgeable staff. Pupils, including children in the early years, learn new sounds in a clear and systematic way. They read books which are matched closely to the sounds that they are learning. Those pupils who struggle with reading are identified quickly by staff and receive appropriate support to help them to catch up. Almost all pupils become confident, fluent readers by the end of Year 2.

In most other subjects, leaders have organised curriculums carefully so that pupils build on what they already know, including in the early years. For example, older pupils explained to inspectors how their recent learning in history about the Industrial Revolution built on what they knew already about this topic. However, in a small number of subjects, leaders have not organised curriculums as effectively. This means that, on occasion, pupils are not as confident about making links with the work that they have done previously.

Teachers use their expertise and support from subject leaders well, in order to deliver curriculum plans effectively and deepen pupils' understanding of concepts. Teachers use assessment strategies effectively, to address pupils' misconceptions and to design learning that meets pupils' needs.

Children settle quickly in the early years. Staff establish routines swiftly. These routines form firm foundations on which to build. The systems to manage pupils' behaviour are applied consistently well by staff. As a result, classrooms are calm. Pupils know that they are expected to behave well. Their learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Pupils understand the importance of democracy, tolerance and respect for others. For example, pupils learn about other faiths and cultures, including the many represented in the school.

Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified as early as possible. Pupils with SEND benefit from appropriate support from staff. Staff liaise effectively with parents and carers and outside agencies. Those pupils who require additional support with their emotional well-being are supported effectively by pastoral staff.

Leaders check carefully on how well all pupils, including children in the early years, are learning and remembering the intended curriculum. As a result, leaders and governors have an accurate view of the curriculum areas that require further development. Members of the governing body provide an appropriate level of challenge and support for leaders.

Staff are positive about the support that they receive from leaders and governors. Staff appreciate the consideration that leaders and governors give to their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. They know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. Staff remain vigilant to potential signs of harm.

Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families benefit from appropriate support when needed. This includes working with highly skilled pastoral staff. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe outside of school, such as when they are working or playing online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not organised the curriculum sufficiently well so that pupils can build on earlier learning. This hinders pupils from making connections and deepening their knowledge of these subjects over time. Leaders should ensure that, in these subjects, learning is sequenced carefully so that pupils can make links with prior learning and build on what they know already.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2016.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	105826
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10199923
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	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elizabeth Skilling
Headteacher	Michael Unsworth
Website	www.stjohnsrc.rochdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 and 7 July 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The last section 48 inspection was in May 2019.
- The school does not use alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic and has taken this into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with three members of the governing body, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and staff. The inspector also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Salford.

- The inspector spoke with pupils to gather their views about the school. The inspector spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspector checked on safeguarding procedures and documentation relating to safeguarding. The inspector observed pupils’ behaviour around school, and considered leaders’ attendance and behaviour information.
- The inspector considered a range of other school documents, including leaders’ self-evaluation and plans for improvement.
- The inspector did deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. As part of this work, the inspector visited lessons and spoke with subject leaders and teachers. The inspector reviewed pupils’ work and spoke with them about their learning, and observed pupils reading to trusted adults.

Inspection team

Gary Bevin, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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