

Inspection of St Michael and St John's Roman Catholic Primary School, Clitheroe

Lowergate, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 1AG

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

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

What is it like to attend this school?

St Michael and St John's Roman Catholic Primary School is a welcoming place to be. Pupils are friendly and respectful. They are willing and keen to celebrate others for who they are and who they wish to be. Pupils said that they feel cared for and safe.

Leaders, staff and governors have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. This includes those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils enjoy their lessons and try their best in all that they do. Pupils throughout school, including children in early years, typically achieve well.

Pupils behave well during lessons and at social times. They are polite and respectful to each other and to adults. If bullying should occur, it is dealt with effectively.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment experiences. For example, all pupils, from the youngest to the oldest, are invited to enjoy a wide range of clubs, such as science and art. The outdoor spaces are thoughtfully designed to offer pupils the chance to sit quietly and reflect as well as to explore nature and learn how to take care of the environment.

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

Leaders have made considerable improvements to the curriculum since the previous inspection. They have developed an ambitious and well-thought-out curriculum in nearly all subjects across key stages 1 and 2. In these subjects, leaders have considered carefully what they want pupils to know and in the order in which this content will be taught. This is similar in the early years where the curriculum is also well designed and delivered. Most children and pupils progress well through the curriculum, so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

In a small number of subjects, leaders are still finalising their work to ensure that teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn. This means that on occasions, teachers find it difficult to design learning that helps pupils to gain important knowledge. At times, this leads to gaps in pupils' learning.

Leaders have ensured teachers have benefitted from a wide range of curriculum training. This is evident in their strong subject knowledge and the way in which they present learning. Teachers take every opportunity to help pupils recap and remember their previous learning. Most teachers use assessment strategies well to identify where pupils have gaps in their learning. However, at times, some teachers are not adept at picking up where pupils have not understood what has been taught. This makes pupils' learning less secure.

Leaders have prioritised reading across the school. Pupils love to read. They told inspectors how much they enjoyed listening to their teachers reading to them each

day. The inviting and well-stocked library encourages pupils to take books home to read.

In early years, skilled staff take every opportunity to engage children in high-quality conversations as they learn and play. Staff extend and develop children's vocabulary and early language skills. Leaders have successfully adopted a new phonics programme. Staff have been well trained, so that they deliver the programme effectively. Pupils are increasingly accurate and fluent readers. Reading books are closely matched to the sounds that they know. Pupils who struggle to read are offered timely support.

Pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Leaders and teachers accurately identify pupils' additional needs. They ensure that pupils with SEND receive the support that they need to achieve all that they can. Teachers are well supported to understand the best ways to help pupils with SEND thrive in all aspects of their development.

Pupils behave well. On the rare occasion that a pupil forgets to follow the school rules, adults and school prefects quickly and sensitively remind them how to behave. Most pupils attend school regularly.

Pupils are taught about fundamental British values, such as respect and democracy and they are given the chance to recognise and celebrate difference. For example, they learn about different families and racial tolerance. Pupils relish the additional responsibilities that are on offer. For example, pupils in Year 6 proudly told inspectors about how they look after children in the early years. Pupils are offered leadership roles, such as being eco warriors. Pupils have designed and created a large garden area, where they grow vegetables and have carefully crafted an area for insects to live.

Governors use their wide range of expertise effectively to provide support and challenge for leaders. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the support that leaders provide for their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff know how to keep pupils safe. Staff and governors have been appropriately trained. They are aware of the risks that pupils may face in school and in the local community. Staff know pupils well. They respond quickly to any changes in pupils' behaviour or physical appearance and pass on their concerns to leaders. Leaders work closely with a range of agencies to secure support for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils learn about different ways that they can keep themselves safe. This includes staying safe during warm weather and when near water.

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 decided what pupils must learn and when this should happen. Occasionally, this stops pupils from building on what they know. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking, so that teachers know what knowledge pupils must learn and when this should be taught.
- Sometimes, a few teachers do not use assessment strategies as effectively as they could to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge or misconceptions. This holds some pupils back from learning all that they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers are using assessment strategies effectively to help pupils get the most out of their learning across the whole curriculum.

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](#)' 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	119644
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10268317
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	165
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Evans
Headteacher	Zoe Mabbott
Website	www.ssmj.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 and 2 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary-aided Roman Catholic primary school within the Diocese of Salford. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2016.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leadership team. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the local authority and spoke with a representative of the diocese.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other areas of learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors talked with pupils in meetings and around the school at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke with some parents and carers during the inspection.
- Inspectors also reviewed the responses to the online surveys for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors looked at the documentation provided by leaders, including minutes from meetings of the governing body, information about new pupils starting at the school and documentation relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. They also spoke with staff and governors to understand how they keep children safe and reviewed the leaders' records of checks undertaken on staff. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about whether they feel safe in school.

Inspection team

Victoria Burnside, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Eleanor Overland

His Majesty's Inspector

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