

Inspection of a good school: St Mary's CofE Primary School Rawtenstall

Haslingden Old Road, Rawtenstall, Lancashire BB4 8RZ

Inspection dates:

27–28 November 2019

Outcome

St Mary's CofE Primary School Rawtenstall continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils from different faiths and backgrounds learn and play happily together. One pupil described the school as 'a big happy family with everyone looking after each other'. Pupils respect and celebrate their uniqueness. They are polite and well-mannered.

Pupils enjoy their learning in school. Leaders plan exciting opportunities to support learning inside and outside the classroom. The curriculum is brought to life when visitors with a specialist background contribute to lessons. In design and technology, for example, an engineer helped pupils to make model vehicles. A professional table tennis coach runs an after-school club. Technology is also used to good effect to make learning interesting and stimulating.

There are many opportunities for pupils to get involved in school life. Pupils thrive on these extra responsibilities. Year 6 pupils buddy up with the younger pupils at lunchtime. This helps younger pupils to feel happy and safe when they are on the playground.

Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and work hard. They understand what is expected of them. Learning is rarely interrupted by poor behaviour. I saw pupils behaving impeccably during a wet playtime. Pupils say that sometimes there is a bit of falling out. They say that on the rare occasion that bullying happens, teachers sort it out quickly.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They have developed a well-planned curriculum that enables pupils to progress in their learning. Curriculum leaders are experts in their subject. They support each other to structure pupils' learning in a logical order. In some subjects, such as mathematics, pupils build effectively on what they already know and regularly practise the skills that they have learned. Leaders know that in a few subjects, such as history, they still need to give more thought to how the curriculum is taught.

Leaders give reading a high priority across the school. Children learn their phonics as soon as they start the Reception Year. Leaders have ensured that there is a well-planned sequence of sounds for pupils to learn. Adults have been well trained, so they understand what pupils should know and when they should know it. Any pupil falling behind catches up quickly. Reading books are well matched to pupils' phonics knowledge. Pupils read confidently. Almost all pupils achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Parents and carers say they are delighted with how well their children read.

Following a dip in reading standards at the end of key stage 2, leaders were quick to identify the cause. Plans are now in place to widen the range of literature that children read. Teachers are innovative in promoting a love of reading across the school. Older pupils say they love reading a wide variety of books and poems. They say that they particularly enjoy reading classics such as 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'.

Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge to help solve problems. Teachers ensure that number operations like multiplication are regularly revisited so that pupils recite their times tables fluently.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) keep up with their classmates. They work at their own pace and ask adults for support if they need it. Pupils with SEND who have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) are supported well. Leaders ensure that these pupils have access to the same curriculum as everyone else.

Parents know that their children get off to a great start in the Reception Year. Children settle quickly into school routines and make new friends. The teacher develops learning activities in a logical order, particularly in mathematics. Children quickly grasp the fundamentals of adding up and subtracting. They can write numbers correctly and confidently. Adults check children's understanding before moving on to the next task.

Pupils are proud of being a member of the pupil council or 'growing in faith together' (GIFT) team. The GIFT team takes its daily responsibilities for assembly preparation and writing prayers seriously. Pupils learn about each other's faith and talk confidently about the similarities and differences between them.

Pupils benefit from the many opportunities for physical exercise. They know how to keep themselves healthy. Pupils are enthusiastic about the wide range of after-school sports clubs. Pupils are proud that their school has achieved the sports gold mark.

Leaders and governors are mindful of the workload of staff. Staff feel well supported with their workload and the wider opportunities for development that are available to them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that effective systems are in place for staff to raise concerns about pupils' well-being and safety. Staff are well trained and vigilant. They know what to do if

they are concerned about a pupil. Leaders work well with external agencies. The headteacher is persistent in following up his concerns about pupils.

Pupils learn about risks to their well-being through a well-planned programme of activities. Pupils know about many different forms of bullying and how to keep themselves safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In 2019, there was a slight dip in reading standards at the end of key stage 2. Leaders' plans are well under way for pupils in key stage 2 to be exposed to more sophisticated language in books and poetry. Leaders should continue to implement their plan so that pupils can achieve well in their reading.
- In some subjects, such as history, the most important knowledge that pupils must learn is not as well embedded across sequences of lessons as it is in other subjects. This means that pupils do not always learn and remember what they should in these subjects. Leaders must ensure that the key knowledge that pupils must learn is made even clearer in their curriculum plans.

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 school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, 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 convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 3–4 June 2015.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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 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	119368
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10087725
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Karen Girling
Headteacher	Neil Gurman
Website	www.stmaryscep.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 June 2015

Information about this school

- St Marys CofE Primary School is a voluntary controlled school in the Diocese of Manchester. Its last section 48 inspection took place on 26 June 2015.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Before the inspection, I reviewed the information on the school's website and spoke to the headteacher on the telephone about the school's context and curriculum.
- I met with subject leaders for English, mathematics and history. Joint lesson visits were carried out. Pupils' books were looked at. Meetings were held with teachers and pupils to discuss teaching and learning.
- I met with the special educational needs coordinator and the early years foundation stage leader to review the progress of children in their first year at school and pupils with SEND.

- I looked at documentation relating to leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning. We considered school attendance and behaviour information.
- I looked at safeguarding documentation and met with the designated safeguarding lead. We discussed what leaders do to ensure that pupils are kept safe at the school.
- I spoke to parents at the school gate and considered a range of responses from the parent survey.

Inspection team

Garry White, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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