

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Radcliffe

Belgrave Street, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 4DG

Inspection dates

5–6 July 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders and governors have acted decisively to provide a clear direction for the school. This has led to improvements in all aspects of the school's work.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good or better. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and keep a careful check on pupils' progress in English and mathematics.
- Effective support is in place to enable teachers and support staff to learn from best practice in the school and elsewhere. Staff are highly motivated and continually strive to improve.
- The wider curriculum provides a range of experiences that pupils enjoy.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is now good. However, there is still some work to be done to improve the standards reached by this group of pupils.
- Children in the early years make a good start to their education. At times though, they do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing skills when they work on their own.
- Pupils are proud to be members of this friendly and welcoming school. They take a real pride in their achievements and tackle their work with determination and enthusiasm.
- Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils feel safe, well cared for and valued. Well-being and personal development are promoted extremely well.
- Outcomes for pupils have improved markedly since the last inspection and pupil progress in most subjects is now at least good.
- Governors know the school well and challenge senior leaders to continually improve.
- Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their subjects. However, their role in improving the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility is still developing.
- Almost all parents hold highly positive views of the school. Although the school website does not show all the required statutory information parents say that the school keeps them well informed about school matters.
- Checks on pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics are at an early stage.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the improvements in teaching, learning and assessment to raise achievement still further by:
 - making sure that differences between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally, particularly in writing, continue to diminish
 - ensuring that adults in the early years develop children’s skills, particularly in writing, when they work without the aid of an adult.
- Continue to improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the school’s assessment and tracking systems provide an accurate overview of pupils’ progress and attainment in all subjects
 - developing the skills of leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics to enable them to fully contribute to improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that all the required statutory information is published on the school’s website.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have successfully maintained a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement. Leaders have successfully tackled the areas that needed improvement at the time of the previous inspection and St Mary's is now a good school. School leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are taking effective action to make sure that all aspects of the school continue to improve.
- Senior leaders regularly and robustly check the quality of teaching and provide feedback that helps teachers and support staff improve. Where teaching has not been good in the past, leaders have provided additional support that has ensured that it has improved. Leaders set teachers sharp targets and take the quality of teaching into account when making decisions about any pay awards.
- The knowledgeable and well-organised leaders of English and mathematics, together with the deputy headteachers, have played a key role in improving the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes. They continue to provide effective training and support for colleagues.
- Leaders of other subjects are highly committed to bringing about improvements in their areas of responsibility. They value the support provided through external consultants and links with other schools to develop their leadership roles in the school. However, the skills of these leaders are not yet sufficiently developed to enable them to contribute fully to improving the quality of teaching.
- Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively. Pupils' learning and emotional needs are identified quickly and teaching is tailored closely to individual needs. Leadership of this provision is strong. Training for support staff, particularly in developing pupils' basic English and mathematics skills, has increased the impact of these staff on pupils' learning.
- The curriculum is varied and holds pupils' interests well. Pupils develop a range of skills across different subjects. In music, for example, all pupils in Year 3 learn to play the guitar and pupils in the older classes in key stage 2 use tablet computers to compose and record music. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. It is enriched by a wide programme of visits and visitors to the school. After-school clubs are well attended and reflect pupils' varied interests.
- The school has established systems to assess and track pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, similar systems to check and track how well pupils are doing in other subjects are not yet fully in place.
- The impact of the work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is impressive. It is underpinned by the school's Christian ethos. Pupils regularly raise money for charity and take on roles of responsibility. Older pupils, for example, consider some of the difficult issues facing the world today, debating these issues with maturity and recording their ideas thoughtfully. Leaders are strengthening pupils' cultural development, which, while good, is not yet quite as strong as their spiritual, moral and social development.

- Teaching staff are highly committed to the school. They have benefited from external support in areas such as phonics, writing and mathematics and they appreciate senior leaders' investment in their professional development. All staff are confident that they have improved their professional practice. Training and development opportunities are now increasingly provided 'in house' by the school's own staff team. Staff regularly share their expertise and learn about what is working well from each other.
- Senior leaders undertook an external review of the school's deployment of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils following the previous inspection. They have built on the outcomes of the review so that this funding is now used effectively. Leaders rigorously ensure that teachers tackle any barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils may have. This well-focused approach is enabling this group of pupils to make more rapid progress in their learning. However, leaders are aware that there has not been enough time to fully diminish the differences in standards, particularly in writing, between disadvantaged and other pupils.
- The school uses the primary sports funding effectively. A specialist coach provides sessions for pupils and supports staff to develop their skills. Pupils have the opportunity to experience different activities, including fencing and Zumba dancing. They also had the opportunity to meet Beth Tweddle, the Olympic gold medal gymnast. Around 70% of pupils now participate in the wide range of extra-curricular clubs, more than double the number who participated previously.
- Pupils have various opportunities to learn about British values, such as democracy, and they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They constantly show values such as tolerance and respect in their everyday interactions with each other and with adults. Pupils have a strong sense of justice and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Following the previous inspection, school leaders and governors worked closely with the local authority to identify appropriate support from local schools and other external partners. This support, and the best practice within St Mary's, has proved effective in moving the school forward. Much of the training and support for staff is now provided from within the St Mary's staff team and members of the school staff are now providing support for other schools. For example, three members of staff have been identified by the local authority as 'lead practitioners' in English and mathematics.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View and the school's own most recent survey, as well as many of the parents who spoke to inspectors, are highly supportive of the school. They particularly praised the pastoral care and appreciate the way staff know each pupil as an individual. One parent's comment that the school provides, 'a caring, nurturing and very loving environment' for their child summed up that of many.

Governance of the school

- The governing body sought to review their own contribution to the school following the previous inspection. As a result, governors have greatly strengthened their role in providing effective support and challenge for school leaders. Governors have a clear understanding of pupils' progress. They make regular visits to the school to meet with school leaders at all levels and gain first-hand views of the life of the school.
- Governors have a clear picture of where teaching is strongest, where it needs

improving and how it is being strengthened. They check that systems to manage staff performance are properly implemented and that teachers' pay rewards good teaching.

- The governing body regularly seek the views of pupils when they review the performance of the school or are considering any changes to school life.
- Governors check carefully the use of specific funding. It is used effectively, for example to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- The governing body regularly seeks parents' views of the school. The vast majority of parents say that the school communicates well with them. However, the school website does not contain all the required statutory information.
- Governors have acted promptly to recruit a new headteacher due to the forthcoming retirement of the current headteacher at the end of this term. They have also secured a new deputy headteacher, who will also take up his post in September.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has robust safeguarding procedures. Staff are vigilant in looking for and tackling any potential safeguarding issues. Regular and appropriate training for staff is undertaken and information and documentation is kept up to date.
- Any concerns about pupils' well-being are carefully recorded. Strong relationships are in place with a wide range of external agencies as well as with parents to ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Improved teaching means that pupils achieve much better outcomes than at the time of the previous inspection. Teaching is now consistently good or better and the impact on learning, including in reading, writing and mathematics, is reflected in good and sometimes rapid pupil progress.
- Teachers use good subject knowledge to pitch work correctly according to pupils' interests, skills and abilities. Work at the right level of challenge, particularly in English and mathematics, is provided to enable all pupils, including the most able, to make at least good progress. Those pupils who have differences in learning arising from earlier weaknesses in teaching are helped to catch up.
- Leaders have established a very focused system for teaching basic reading skills for early readers. The development of writing skills throughout the school, including that of grammar and spelling skills, is effective. Teachers develop pupils' skills successfully by providing opportunities to write in literacy lessons and in other subjects.
- Pupil outcomes in mathematics were not good enough at the time of the previous inspection. Since that time, significant improvements in the teaching of this aspect have led to impressive improvements, particularly for the most and least able. Teachers ensure that pupils' basic skills in mathematics, such as place value and times table facts, are developed systematically. Teachers identify any gaps in skills and knowledge due to weaknesses in earlier teaching and give close attention to resolving any weaker

aspects. A strength in teaching is the numerous opportunities provided for pupils of all ages to apply reasoning and solve problems. As a result, pupils are becoming resilient mathematicians. They think hard and wrestle confidently with the challenges provided.

- Pupils develop highly positive attitudes to learning because relationships with staff are strong. Adults encourage pupils to have a go and reinforce the message that they should work without fear of failure. Consequently, pupils willingly try new things, confident that their teachers will help them if they go wrong or get stuck.
- Teachers use questioning successfully to move learning on and to check what pupils already know and can do. Work in pupils' books show that the pace of learning is brisk. Once new concepts or new work have been introduced, pupils are offered opportunities to practise what has been learned and, when relevant, learning is quickly moved on so that little learning time is missed.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve and how they should behave. They make learning interesting through good use of resources, such a modern technology. Year 6, for example, wrote scripts and were preparing to film 'survival tips for Year 6' for the current Year 5 using handheld tablets.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well, especially when working with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They sensitively help pupils to improve their skills and knowledge.
- Lack of precise assessment information for subjects other than English and mathematics sometimes prevents teachers planning learning opportunities that help pupils make the best possible progress in these subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are kind and caring. They display very mature attitudes to learning and all aspects of school life. They are confident and say that they feel very safe and well cared for. The vast majority of parents agree with this view.
- Pupils make an excellent contribution to school life. For example, older pupils act as play leaders when they spend time on the younger pupils' playground. Members of the school council give pupils a strong voice in the school. They regularly help their fellow pupils raise funds for charities and play an active role in the decision-making processes of the school. Representatives of the school council offer their ideas about what is working well and how the school can be improved when they meet with governors at the start of governing body meetings.
- Activities in lessons help pupils to develop a clear understanding of how they can keep healthy through making healthy food choices and developing an active lifestyle. A significant increase in the number of pupils taking part in after-school clubs demonstrates the impact of this learning. Pupils are taught how to stay safe when using the internet. They explain clearly how websites can be blocked and show they understand the potential pitfalls when using social media.

- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They say that bullying happens very rarely. School records and the overwhelming opinion of parents who responded to parent view or spoke to inspectors support pupils' view. Pupils trust the adults to listen and deal with any issues quickly. Older pupils are prepared well for the move to secondary school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils have high aspirations for their own achievement and they should be rightly proud of the work in their books. Work is usually neat and very well presented. The amount and quality of work, particularly in English and mathematics, demonstrates excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils enjoy working in small teams and little time is lost when learning takes place in this way. Pupils readily share ideas and listen attentively to others.
- Pupils get on very well together and they are unfailingly polite. There is a happy atmosphere when pupils play together at playtimes and lunchtimes. Pupils are really pleased with the new equipment that has been installed to help them be active at these times. They take turns and use the equipment sensibly. And have fun!
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school life and are very keen to earn awards for example for good attendance and for making excellent efforts with their work. Levels of attendance are slightly above the national average and due to the concerted efforts of pupils, parents and staff, fewer pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, now miss school on a regular basis. This is a good improvement on previous levels of persistent absence.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Due to the concerted efforts of the headteacher, senior leaders and staff, improved teaching means that pupils make better progress than at the time of the previous inspection. From starting points often below those typical for their age, pupils now make at least good and sometimes rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment is generally improving quickly across the school. The unpublished 2017 performance information shows that, in reading, writing and mathematics for the current Year 2 and Year 6, outcomes at the expected and above-expected levels for their age improved again. They are higher than the national end-of-year assessments for the end of key stage 1 and 2 year groups in 2016. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education.
- A strong focus on reading is evident. In 2016, the result of the Year 1 phonics screening check was above average. Unverified outcomes in 2017 suggest that this standard has been maintained for the current Year 1.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make at least good progress from their starting points because their individual needs are identified accurately and provision is good.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made outstanding progress in reading and

broadly average progress in mathematics. However, progress in writing was well below that of other pupils in the school and elsewhere. Standards in writing of disadvantaged pupils were much lower than that of other pupils. None of the most able disadvantaged pupils were working above the level expected for their age in this subject. Across the school, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was generally lower than that of other pupils in most subjects. Determined action taken by leaders, including the effective deployment of the pupil premium funding, has reversed this trend. As a result, disadvantaged pupils made at least good progress across the school in 2017 and differences in standards between this group and other pupils in all subjects are diminishing. However, leaders are aware that there is more to do to ensure the rapid progress needed to enable this group of pupils to reach their full potential, particularly in writing.

- The most able pupils make good progress most of the time. The school provides good opportunities for them to extend their learning, both in lessons and in activities outside the classroom.
- Some differences between the outcomes of boys and girls are largely related to the individual starting points and abilities of pupils. Nevertheless, the school has reviewed its curriculum to cater for the interests of both sexes.
- Work in pupils' books illustrates that pupils generally make good progress in a range of subjects beyond English and mathematics. However, the lack of precise assessment information in these subjects sometimes prevents pupils from making even more rapid progress.

Early years provision

Good

- As a result of good teaching, children make at least good progress in early years from skills, knowledge and understanding that are below typical for their age when they join the school.
- Children's attainment by the end of the Reception Year has been rising steadily over recent years. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development was above average in 2016 and has risen again in 2017. An increasing proportion of children do better than this too. Children are well prepared for life in Year 1.
- Children learn well and play happily together in the large, busy and lively learning environment. All settle happily and are clearly familiar with classroom routines and children become increasingly independent as adults help them develop socially and emotionally. Children listen carefully to adults and each other. They take turns and share toys readily and chat happily to each other and the adults as they explore and use the activities provided.
- Accurate checks on how well everyone is doing help adults know children as individuals. Early reading, writing and mathematics skills are taught effectively in sessions led by adults. Children use their understanding of phonics well to tackle unfamiliar words and they are keen to show adults how accurately they can count objects and order numbers. Handwriting skills were impressive as children used the school's agreed style to record work during a phonics session that took place during the inspection.

- Teachers plan a range of engaging activities which are adapted promptly to respond to the interests of children. Good use is made of the indoor and outdoor space to develop most aspects of learning.
- Adults use good subject knowledge to help children make good progress when they lead focused teaching sessions for groups. However, too few opportunities are available for children to practise what they have learned in these sessions when children work and play without the aid of an adult. This is especially the case in developing children's writing skills and, as a result, progress is not as rapid as it could be at these times.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. They are curious, interested learners. They particularly enjoy using the outdoor area to create games and explore their environment. During the inspection children enjoyed developing the ability to balance on the car tyres in the garden area. They quickly found that if they took the tyres to the top of the short slope in the garden area they could roll the tyres down the hill. Great cooperation between children turned this into an exciting activity and much fun was had by all.
- A strong early years team is in place. All adults play their part in making sure that children are nurtured and kept safe. Leadership of the early years is good. Leaders swiftly identify children's needs when they join the school. They keep a close eye on children's progress, quickly giving extra support to those whose progress may be slowing.
- Leaders are aware that children who are disadvantaged have not made the same good progress as other children in recent years. Steps taken since the last inspection have ensured that additional fund for this group is now used effectively. It has enabled disadvantaged pupils to make good and sometimes rapid progress from their starting points. As a result, the attainment of this group is close to that of their peers.
- Staff are trained in all aspects of safeguarding and welfare arrangements are good.
- Parents say that their children make good progress, are cared for well and are happy to come to school. Some parents talked about how well staff prepare children for the move to Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	105353
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10032173

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	456
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Declan Simpson
Headteacher	Paul Heaton
Telephone number	0161 723 4210
Website	www.stmarys-radcliffe.org.uk
Email address	StMarysRadcliffe@bury.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 May 2017

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the performance of pupils, the curriculum and details of the governing body's committee structure and attendance at meetings.
- The school is larger than other schools.
- Most children attend Nursery part time. All children attend the Reception classes full time.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special education needs or an

education, health care plan is above average.

- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced significant staffing changes. The leadership team was reorganised to include the post of assistant headteacher. A new deputy headteacher joined the school shortly after the previous inspection. She was subsequently promoted to headship at a local school in April 2017. An interim deputy headteacher is currently in post. A number of teachers, including the leaders of English and mathematics, have left the school, mostly for promotion to other posts.
- The substantive headteacher will retire in August 2017. The governors have appointed an experienced headteacher who, together with a new deputy headteacher, will take up his post in September 2017.
- The governing body has been reconstituted and a new chair of governors and vice chair are in place.
- The school has received external support from the local authority the archdiocese. The headteacher (a national leader of education) and staff of the Guardian Angels RC Primary School, Bury also provided support for the school in their role as a national support school.
- A private provider offers a before-and-after-school club on the school premises. This provision is subject to separate inspection arrangements. Inspection reports may be viewed on the Ofsted website.
- The school meets the government's floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school does not meet the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. They observed learning in classes and in small groups.
- The inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and talked to them about their work. They listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills. Inspectors talked to pupils about the books they have enjoyed and those they are currently reading. Inspectors took note of displays around the school.
- Inspectors talked with pupils informally as they played at breaktimes, visited the dining hall at lunchtime and observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around school. They met formally with three groups of pupils.
- An inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and four other governors.
- An inspector met with a representative of the local authority and the national leader of education (NLE) who has provided support for the school since the previous inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with members of school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day. They took account of 51 responses to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View), 19 responses to the pupil survey and 18 responses to the staff survey. The school's most recent surveys of pupils' and parents' views were also considered.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including information about pupils' progress, school improvement plans, information about teachers' performance and external views of the school. Inspectors reviewed the contents of the school's website and scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding completed by school staff.
- During the inspection, pupils in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 took part in end-of-year sports events attended by their parents. Pupils performed an end-of-year concert for parents and Year 6 were preparing for their 'leavers' mass in the local church.

Inspection team

Lyn Pender, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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