

# St Marie's Roman Catholic Primary School, Bury

Edward Street, The Mosses, Bury, Lancashire BL9 0RZ

## Inspection dates

1–2 December 2016

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher has realised her aspiration of ensuring that the school provides an excellent education for all pupils, irrespective of their backgrounds or starting points.
- Governors and the headteacher have created a school culture where pupils are highly motivated and very keen to learn. Pupils feel very safe and happy in lessons and at social times.
- Teaching and learning is very well managed. Leaders' expectations of teachers and teaching assistants are high. All staff work hard and successfully. There is a clear 'St Marie's way' of doing things. Highly effective teaching is based on consistently applied principles from Nursery through to Year 6.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They enjoy school and participate with enthusiasm. In class they concentrate well and respond very positively to different sorts of tasks. Pupils are careful and courteous. They work and play cooperatively and enjoy a wide range of activities. They clearly care for each other.
- Leaders' rigorous and principled approach has secured substantial improvement since the last inspection. Leaders know accurately how well pupils are achieving. However, their evaluation of the school's improvement does not use pupils' achievement sharply enough as a key measure of success.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is carefully nurtured from the moment they step inside this harmonious school. Pupils show respect for other children and adults. They listen well and are confident to express their opinions.
- An increasing majority of children start this school having spoken very little or no English. Provision to support these pupils is outstanding and so they learn English quickly. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, they have typically made excellent progress across all subjects from low starting points.
- In the early years, children get off to an excellent start. The environment is stimulating and adults skilfully ensure that children develop quickly. Children are happy, very well looked after and love their learning.
- Excellent leadership and teaching ensure that pupils receive an outstanding academic education and make outstanding gains in their personal development.
- Pupils of all ages make rapid progress in mathematics as a result of the school's concerted and effective work to improve teaching in this subject.
- Pupils' skills in using English grammar and punctuation are not as strong as their other excellent skills in writing.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Use pupils' achievement more consistently to establish criteria on which to base evaluations of the impact of school developments.
- Ensure that pupils' understanding of grammar and punctuation is as strong as their ability to write creatively and fluently.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher and governors have successfully developed a school ethos which both expects and enables all pupils to thrive. This is a very successful school in which a consistently strong emphasis is placed on pupils' personal development and their academic achievement. St Marie's is a school where pupils love to attend, are very well cared for and are very happy.
- The headteacher manages the school with considerable skill. She has also developed other staff in the school to be highly effective leaders. Consequently, the high number of pupils who are new to learning English are particularly well supported, as are pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Teaching is managed very well. Teachers and leaders carefully analyse what works for their pupils and what does not. They are then able to extend successful St Marie's practice throughout the school. There is a consistency in standards, requirements, systems and procedures. Adults working in the school, alongside pupils, know and understand exactly what is expected of them. Teaching is consistently strong and effective. Consequently, teachers are confident that they are building on knowledge and skills that pupils have already learned securely in previous classes. Pupils benefit from experiencing consistent approaches. For example, teachers follow and develop consistent methods when teaching pupils how to do mathematical calculations, or use phonics to learn how to read and spell. They have a shared expectation of how pupils should respond to their feedback.
- Leaders plan opportunities for the professional development of teachers carefully so that any areas in need of development are quickly improved. The school's system to appraise the performance of teachers and teaching assistants, and then to support their development, is very effective. All adults working in the school feel very well supported. They are extremely loyal to the headteacher because they believe strongly that she is doing an excellent job.
- The progress that pupils make is frequently monitored. This enables early identification of any pupils whose progress slows or where gaps in their understanding appear. Using this information, teachers respond quickly, and help pupils to catch up rapidly.
- The school has a strong legacy of accurately monitoring the progress of pupils throughout the year. Over years, this accuracy has been confirmed by external moderation and external examination results. Teachers' accurate understanding of pupils' skills provides a strong spine for the school's work.
- School governors and the headteacher have an accurate view of exactly how well the school is performing. There is no complacency. Leaders and teachers are constantly striving for improvement. Plans to improve the school are generally well established. However, the criteria the school uses to measure the success of these developments are sometimes imprecise and do not focus precisely enough on raising pupils' achievement.

- The school's curriculum is well designed and ensures that pupils experience a wide range of very engaging activities and topics. Pupils say there are no subjects which they dislike. The curriculum is enriched through a wide range of additional activities and educational visits. This rich curriculum, excellent role modelling by adults and high expectations of behaviour help to ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are knowledgeable about other religions and cultures. They value each other and when making friendships they do not have discriminatory attitudes. Pupils are respectful of all their peers and staff. The school is a very harmonious community.
- The school makes excellent use of any additional funding it receives. Pupils who are disadvantaged receive additional support to ensure that they make strong progress and have similar opportunities to learn as others. Additional physical education (PE) and sports funding enables the school to broaden the range of opportunities pupils have. Pupils now have a wider range of sports available to them. Staff receive training and say they are now more confident to teach PE and take clubs. The school has notable success in ensuring that all year 5 pupils learn to swim.
- Parents are very complimentary about the school. They feel welcomed and well informed. They have a high regard for the quality of leadership and teaching throughout the school. They believe that their children are safe and very well looked after.

## **Governance**

- School governors are as passionate as the headteacher about ensuring excellent provision. They offer the headteacher excellent support. As a group they have a broad range of experience and expertise. They use their talents to ensure that the school's budget is well spent. They carefully monitor the impact of their spending, including additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and funding to enhance sports and PE provision. They have sufficient understanding of the school's achievement data to hold the headteacher to account.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils are taught how to be safe. They fully understand how to look after themselves in a variety of situations, including when using the internet and social media. Pupils also care for each other. They would confidently speak to an adult if they had any concerns about themselves or a friend.
- Governors have ensured that safeguarding procedures are very effective. All adults working in the school are well informed about keeping children safe. They are well trained on how to care for pupils and how to respond appropriately if they have concerns. The school ensures that all local agencies dedicated to keeping children safe respond promptly to any concerns it raises. Record-keeping is comprehensive and systematic. Recruitment procedures are secure. The school works effectively with parents to keep children safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- Teachers know the skills and strengths of every pupil they teach. They know the aspects of learning in which they excel and those which they find more difficult. Coupled with this, teachers have an in-depth understanding of the curriculum. This enables them to plan learning very well, fully meeting the needs of their pupils. Teachers also plan for the pupils' learning to be fun. They involve pupils in a variety of very engaging activities. Pupils have lots of opportunities to work in different ways that maintain high levels of interest. It is not surprising that pupils enjoy their learning so much. Teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve. There is an industrious atmosphere in classes where everyone works hard and is happy.
- Teachers have a very good understanding of how well their pupils understand their work because they regularly and accurately assess their progress. For example, teachers use questions well. Sometimes questions will be used to extend pupils' understanding, to make them think more deeply. At other times, teachers use questions to find out how well a pupil or pupils have learned something. Teachers use tests judiciously to establish the effectiveness of their teaching. With this information, teachers skilfully adapt what and how they are teaching, ensuring that pupils learn very well.
- The way teachers assess pupils' work and give them feedback is consistent across the school. Pupils know what to expect and how they should respond. They make strong progress, supported by effective feedback, although a few pupils continue to make the same mistakes in punctuation and grammar. Homework is another firmly established routine. It is set regularly and is always of a good quality to extend pupils' learning.
- Pupils love to learn and their behaviour is excellent. They take great pride in the work, which they present carefully. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent. Pupils have considerable respect for their teachers and other adults in the school. Pupils know all adults in the school work very hard and effectively to educate and care for them.
- Teaching assistants are very well trained and knowledgeable. They support individuals and small groups very well. This support helps pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to progress quickly. Additional early support for pupils who are new to speaking English enables them to learn rapidly. Teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled at teaching phonics systematically and in small groups.
- The school's environment is bright and stimulating. Pupils' work is celebrated around the school. Pupils use high-quality resources. There is an extensive range of high-quality books in the library.

## 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 very well cared for. Pupils respond to the school's caring ethos and show respect and care for each other.
- Staff know the strengths and needs of every pupil. This enables adults to keep a close eye on pupils and respond when one appears not to be their usual happy self. School staff have very good relationships with parents who say their children are very well looked after. The close work between staff and parents encourages parents to seek guidance from the school. The school's family support worker plays a key role in ensuring that pupils are well looked after and flourish.
- For those pupils who need additional emotional support, the school provides individual assistance or group work. Pupils learn about other people's feelings, how to resolve conflicts and how to express themselves to achieve positive outcomes.
- Pupils' personal development is exemplary. Pupils have a well-developed moral code and are very caring. The school systematically develops pupils' leadership skills through giving them increasing responsibility.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The school's methods for developing highly positive behaviour are subtle. Adults ensure that pupils enjoy being at school and learning. They promote positive attitudes to others from different backgrounds, religions and cultures. The school systematically develops pupils' abilities to communicate appropriately with each other and with adults. The school celebrates and recognises achievement and success. Pupils quickly take responsibility for their own behaviour and are prepared to intervene positively when, on the rare occasion, someone does not live up to their own high expectations.
- Learning motivates pupils. When working away from the direct supervision of the teacher, pupils work just as hard and consistently produce work of which they are proud. Teachers place great importance on developing the skills pupils need to learn independently and through discussion with learning partners and groups. This helps pupils learn quickly how to work productively and collaboratively. They develop important social skills they will need in their futures.
- Pupils move calmly around the school building and during break and lunchtimes when they have fun playing happily. Pupils say incidents of bullying are very rare and when they do occur, they will inform their teacher, knowing they will treat it very seriously and effectively.
- Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have very good attendance. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent was very small last year. However, this year the figure has crept up a little. The school's response to this temporary situation is sensitive and appropriate.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- Pupils typically make excellent progress from their starting points across a range of subjects. In 2016, progress made by Year 6 pupils in writing and mathematics was very strong from their starting points at the end of key stage 1. Their progress in reading was good. The school's overall attainment figure was slightly depressed because of the low starting points of pupils. Prior to 2016, achievement across all subjects had been consistently outstanding. Pupils currently in the school make excellent progress.
- Phonics is very well taught throughout the school. All staff follow the same systems and have the same expectations, so pupils build an excellent set of strategies to help them read and spell. At the end of year 1, a similar proportion of pupils to national attained the expected standard in their phonics screening check. This represents excellent progress because, for many, their starting points were very low. By the end of Year 2, all pupils have reached the expected standard. Again this represents a considerable achievement. Pupils continue to develop their reading skills throughout the school. The vast majority of pupils enjoy reading and do so confidently.
- The strong foundation in writing that children develop in the early years is built on throughout key stages 1 and 2. Pupils write imaginatively, creatively and clearly to engage the reader. Pupils' high-quality writing is evident across all subjects. For example, in religious education, pupils explain similarities across a wide range of religions, expressing their ideas confidently and clearly. Pupils' application of the rules of grammar and punctuation are not quite so well developed. So, despite teachers pointing out errors, pupils take a little more time to improve this aspect of their work. Overall, pupils make excellent progress in writing.
- The school has focused on improving the teaching of mathematics over recent years, and there has been a corresponding improvement in the progress that pupils make in mathematics. The progress being made by current pupils in mathematics is excellent. Their arithmetical skills are firmly embedded and frequently used. Pupils also develop a strong understanding of shape, space, statistics and algebra. This enables them to very successfully solve mathematical problems in different contexts.
- Pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum throughout both key stages. They evidently enjoy science, including developing their practical scientific skills. Pupils make excellent progress across all subjects. Teachers regularly reinforce literacy and numeracy skills through their learning in different subjects.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged make similar excellent progress to other pupils in the school. They make much better progress than other pupils nationally. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress because they are supported so very well. Adults know their pupils' needs in detail and skilfully adapt activities and challenges precisely so that all can achieve well.
- Pupils who start off with strong development continue to make excellent progress, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. Teachers are not complacent and adapt their expectations of the most able, giving them suitably challenging work which raises their achievement still further. Pupils from all starting points and all abilities make excellent progress.

- Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning, social skills and a firm foundation across the whole curriculum prepare them very well for their next steps in education beyond Year 6.

### Early years provision

### Outstanding

- Three quarters of children had learned little or no English when they started Nursery this year. For this reason, children's communication development on starting Nursery is very low. Adults throughout the early years setting are highly skilled in developing children's speaking and writing skills, so children start to catch up very quickly.
- The vibrant early years environment stimulates children. They are excited by the activities and resources, so they are very keen to talk to other children. Adults are highly imaginative in creating situations which children respond by talking about their play.
- In both outside and inside areas, resources are readily available for children to begin to write their ideas. Adults know precisely the level of development each child is at, and so they can encourage children to write letters, words or simple sentences.
- The development of children's speaking, reading and writing skills is systematic and very well managed.
- Alongside the considerable focus on teaching children to communicate, all other areas of development are also very well taught. Children develop their understanding of numbers and shapes quickly. Their social skills and behaviour are excellent because all adults set high expectations and create a fun environment. Already children are learning how to care for each other. While outside they are confident running, jumping and developing their physical skills.
- Children develop quickly because the early years provision is expertly led and all adults who work with the children know how to best support and develop individuals, irrespective of their starting points. Children who are disadvantaged make very strong progress. All children are very well prepared for starting Year 1 because they have developed a love for learning, know how to behave and have gained considerable confidence in learning English. Their development at this stage still has not caught up, but they have made great progress towards that goal. Over recent years, children's level of development on leaving the early years has improved considerably.
- Parents get many opportunities to work with their children in the early years setting. They say they feel very engaged in their child's learning and they value highly the partnership they have with adults working in the school.
- The school has also worked with external advisers to great effect to improve the early years provision.

## School details

Unique reference number	105335
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10002868

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	251
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Fish
Headteacher	Fiona Robinson
Telephone number	0161 764 3204
Website	<a href="http://www.stmariesrcp.co.uk">www.stmariesrcp.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:StMaries@bury.gov.uk">StMaries@bury.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2012

## Information about this school

- St Marie's is an average-sized school, situated in central Bury. It is a very popular school and has been oversubscribed for a number of years. Two thirds of pupils speak a first language other than English. This proportion is increasing. Most of these pupils are of eastern European or Asian heritage. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to national, as is the proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged. There are more girls on role than boys.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There is provision for before- and after-school care on the same site as the school which is subject to a different inspection.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teaching staff, a group of pupils, six members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector met with the school's family support worker.
- Documents were scrutinised including safeguarding checks, child protection information, pupils' achievement tracking and records of checks on the quality of teaching. Inspectors considered school evaluations and improvement plans.
- Inspectors visited classrooms and spoke to pupils, looked at their books and observed their learning. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors scrutinised work produced by both current and past pupils and over a range of subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils playing at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of seven online parental comments. They considered 13 online survey responses made by staff and eight pupil responses. Inspectors spoke with parents.

## Inspection team

Neil Mackenzie, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie Kynaston	Ofsted Inspector
John Daley	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Kelly	Ofsted Inspector

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