

Inspection of St Alphonsus RC Primary School

Hamilton Street, Off Stretford Road, Old Trafford, Manchester M16 7PT

Inspection dates:	22 and 23 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since April 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is highly ambitious for the achievement of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils benefit from exceptional personal, social and emotional support. This contributes strongly to how well pupils achieve.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They described it as 'one big family'. There are strong relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils are extremely polite and well mannered. They speak confidently and articulately with visitors. Pupils champion the positive contribution that they make to their school and to the wider community. For example, the school's eco team lead activities to improve their local area.

Classroom environments are extremely calm and purposeful. This allows pupils to do their best in lessons. Pupils are inquisitive and display highly positive attitudes towards their learning.

Pupils have a highly developed understanding of equality and diversity, which they understand how to apply in a range of contexts both in school and in their community. They revel in their many responsibilities, including as head pupils or members of the school council. A wide variety of visits and extra-curricular activities significantly enhance pupils' learning across the curriculum. Pupils themselves help to shape the school's wider offer. For example, reading ambassadors spoke with pride about their initiative to promote reading during lunch time.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. This meets the needs of the diverse school population. The curriculum carefully sets out the knowledge that pupils should learn from the early years to Year 6. In most subjects, the curriculum is implemented well and pupils achieve highly. Teachers use secure subject knowledge to carefully design activities and resources which help pupils to learn the curriculum. However, in some subjects, teaching does not develop pupils' vocabulary well enough. As a result, pupils' cannot explain their understanding and discuss their learning with as much clarity as they should.

Within lessons, teachers use assessment strategies effectively to check how well pupils are learning. This helps them to identify and address pupils' misconceptions as they happen. However, the school's approaches to provide opportunities for pupils to retain key knowledge over time are at an early stage in some subjects. This means that sometimes it is not identified that pupils do not have secure prior learning before moving onto the next concept. This hinders how effectively teachers build on what pupils already know.

The school prioritises reading. In the early years, children have opportunities to listen to stories and rhymes that develop their vocabulary. Staff deliver the well-ordered phonics programme effectively. They make sure that children in the early years, and pupils in key stage 1, read from books that include the sounds that they have already learned.

Teachers are swift to spot any pupils who are not keeping up with the programme and help them to catch up quickly. Older pupils develop effective reading habits. They read confidently with both fluency and expression.

The school works effectively to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND at the earliest possible opportunity. Staff check carefully that appropriate support is in place for these pupils as they move through the school. As a result, pupils with SEND participate in all aspects of school life and achieve well.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They follow routines impeccably. Pupils are resilient when faced with challenges. Pupils are respectful, determined and focused. The school has developed clear procedures to manage pupils' attendance and punctuality. It works effectively with families to support pupils where their attendance needs to improve. As a result, most pupils attend school regularly and on time.

The programme to support pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils become confident individuals, with a strong sense of moral and social purpose. They value the incredibly wide range of leadership opportunities available to them. These opportunities enable pupils to make positive improvements to their experience of school, such as through the school council. Pupils develop a sophisticated understanding of healthy lifestyles and online safety. This means that they are exceptionally well prepared for life beyond school. The school encourages pupils to celebrate difference and to feel empowered to be who they want to be. A typical comment from pupils was that 'everyone gets to be part of something in our school.'

The school has created a culture of ambition and continuous improvement for staff and pupils alike. The governing body has effective systems to support and challenge the school to continue to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. Staff are proud to work at the school. They value the strong relationships and teamwork with their colleagues. Staff appreciate the many training opportunities that the school provides for them. The school considers staff's workload to help them to fulfil their responsibilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the opportunities built into the curriculum to revisit previous learning are at an early stage of development. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always identified effectively. The school should ensure that the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop secure foundations on which to build new learning.
- In some subjects, teaching does not develop pupils' understanding of vocabulary well enough. This means that pupils are not fully secure in the vocabulary that the

curriculum intends them to gain. The school should provide further guidance for staff on the delivery of the curriculums in these subjects to ensure pupils successfully develop the vocabulary that the curriculum outlines.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	106360
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10348023
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	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Scott Caplan
Headteacher	Tina Birds
Website	www.stalphonsus-trafford.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 and 9 April 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The chair of governors was unavailable during the inspection.
- This school is a Roman Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Salford. The last section 48 inspection of schools with a religious character took place in June 2019. The next section 48 inspection is expected during the 2027/28 academic year.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and with other leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with the members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector also spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. They talked with curriculum leaders of these subject areas. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and spoke with pupils. The lead inspector also observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school. They also observed pupils while they played outside at playtime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also met with parents and carers before school.
- There were no responses to the pupil or staff online surveys.

Inspection team

Ian Shackleton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ian Cooper

Ofsted Inspector

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