

St Mary's CofE Primary School

Address: Buckingham Road, Cadishead, Manchester, Lancashire, M44 5HG

Unique reference number (URN): 105936

Inspection report: 21 April 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve well. This is reflected in their attainment at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils generally achieve close to and sometimes slightly above national averages. This is also the case with the Year 4 multiplication check and the Year 1 phonics check.

Leaders prioritise children getting off to a confident start in the early years. This includes ensuring that children secure the key knowledge that they need in reading, writing and mathematics to be successful as they move through the school.

In other subjects, pupils secure the knowledge that they need in each area as they move through the school. Pupils typically remember key learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 recall events that took place during the Great Fire of London. They can also describe 'mummification' and 'reincarnation' linked to their current topic of Ancient Egypt. Leaders know that more precise and effective teaching in some subjects will support pupils to achieve even more highly across the curriculum.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders make pupils' experiences at school highly positive. As a result, pupils attend regularly. Leaders put support in place that reduces any barriers to regular attendance that pupils may have. For example, some pupils receive additional support each morning to make a smooth transition between home and school. Leaders' systems and procedures to promote regular attendance are effective. Attendance is rightly a whole-school responsibility. Leaders work with external agencies to support families who need it. Consequently, attendance is close to national averages for all groups, including those pupils who are disadvantaged.

Staff are positive role models for pupils' behaviour. Warm relationships feature throughout the school, both between pupils and with adults. Pupils show self-control and dedication to their learning. Pupils play well together and conduct themselves sensibly, including at social times. Pupils are confident that bullying is not tolerated. Where there is an issue, staff are consistent in dealing with this in line with the school's policy. Pupils value their education, and this is reflected in their behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils who need it receive the precise support that they need to improve their behaviour. Leaders use suspensions appropriately, when necessary.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Since the last inspection, leaders have developed St Mary's curriculum offer. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is well planned for each subject and year group. Leaders carefully consider how pupils will learn important knowledge. Pupils' work shows how they build knowledge sequentially and are able to remember what has come before.

The curriculum is typically taught well. Staff prioritise pupils' communication and language development. Teachers ensure that pupils develop reading skills, their spoken and written English and mathematical understanding. As a result, pupils develop reading, writing and mathematical skills securely. Generally, this ensures that pupils are ready for the next phase in education.

On the whole, teaching meets pupils' needs and enables them to make suitable progress. However, teachers do not always make highly effective choices about how best to teach a particular subject to different phases. Leaders acknowledge there is work to be done to sharpen teaching, particularly in some foundation subjects, in order to help pupils deepen their learning even more.

Pupils receive the help that they need to keep up with the pace of the phonics programme. This ensures that pupils continue to make secure progress in phonics in line with their peers wherever possible.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the early years make a positive start at St Mary's. Experienced staff know the children well as individuals. Staff use praise consistently and model appropriate language, such as 'please' and 'thank you'. Children respond well to this and are beginning to adopt these behaviours independently. Consequently, children develop confidence and social skills. Children in the early years feel safe and secure because staff respond to their emotional needs as well as their academic development.

Phonics and early mathematics are prioritised. Most children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are able to participate and engage with the learning. As a result, most children secure the important number facts and word-reading skills that they need to be ready for Year 1. The outdoor environment is an exciting space where staff prioritise children's physical development, language and exploration. Children get along well with each other. They learn to share and take turns. Staff encourage children to develop independence. For example, they expect children to wash their hands and access drinks without direction. These routines prepare children well for their next stage. Staff share useful information about children's learning and progress with parents and carers.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have high expectations for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They think about each child as an individual. Leaders know pupils' needs well. They make regular checks to make sure that the support they offer helps pupils to learn well. Staff set appropriate targets for pupils that enable them to make progress. Teaching staff regularly review learning plans and make adjustments when needed.

Leaders provide training that helps staff to identify and respond to pupils' needs. This ensures that staff feel confident to support pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to make progress from their starting points. Teachers use a range of resources to help pupils to learn well. Leaders ensure that pupils, including those with barriers to learning, such as those known to social care, are given any additional pastoral or academic support. This helps to ensure that any barriers to pupils' learning or wellbeing are reduced.

Leaders' strategy for supporting disadvantaged pupils is effective. They use nationally recognised effective practice to shape their ideas. Leaders and governors carefully monitor the impact of their pupil premium spending on outcomes for pupils. Leaders make appropriate and safe use of alternative provision for some pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious for the school's continued development. They identify clear priorities for school improvement. Leaders care deeply about pupils and the community that they live in. They know the school's population well. Leaders prioritise identification of vulnerable groups and individuals who would benefit from further support, such as counselling or speech and language therapy. This helps them to take targeted action to ensure that pupils' needs, both pastoral and academic, are met.

Governors are clear about what the school does well and where it needs to improve. They are committed to providing support and challenge that promotes school improvement. Governors make regular checks on the accuracy of information leaders share with them. They gain the necessary assurances about how leaders' decisions make the most impact on pupils' learning. Governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively, for example in relation to safeguarding and financial accountability. They keep close oversight over the school's strategy for making sure additional funding has a positive impact on disadvantaged pupils and review it regularly.

Staff feel valued. They benefit from meaningful professional development that helps them to fulfil their roles well. Staff feel that leaders carefully consider workload implications and wellbeing when introducing new initiatives. Staff take pride in being part of a happy school that puts pupils at its heart. Parents and carers are proud to send their children to St Mary's. They value the school's safe, secure environment which prioritises wellbeing and a sense of belonging.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have established an effective personal development programme. This helps pupils to develop confidence, resilience and a secure understanding of the world around them. As a result, pupils learn to be considerate of others. They understand their responsibilities within school and as citizens of the wider community. Older pupils enjoy taking on roles such as librarians and wellbeing ambassadors. One pupil said, 'It's more than wearing a lanyard, it's about supporting people who are sad or worried.'

Pupils develop a secure and age-appropriate understanding of mental and physical wellbeing and healthy relationships. They benefit from a wide range of meaningful experiences that enhance their understanding. This includes whole-school initiatives focused on first aid, road safety and managing risk in real-world contexts. Consequently, pupils develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Leaders have put into place a relationships, sex and health education curriculum that is well structured. It supports pupils to learn about healthy relationships.

Leaders provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures and faiths and to engage with local and national issues. Pupils respect those with different

beliefs. They also learn about the importance of fundamental British values, such as tolerance and democracy, and their importance in society. Pupils are encouraged to consider different viewpoints. This helps them to develop respectful and tolerant attitudes.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, benefit from a suitable range of enrichment opportunities. This includes clubs and career-related experiences, such as 'Aspirations Day'. This is when visitors talk about their journeys to jobs, such as becoming a nurse, a police officer or a computer scientist. This helps to broaden pupils' horizons and prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

St Mary's is a caring school community. Daily life is shaped by the core values of love, equality, hope and forgiveness. This has a positive influence on how pupils treat one another and how staff support them. Relationships between pupils and staff play an important role in everyday life. Pupils benefit from strong connections between home, school and the wider community. This creates a supportive network around each child. Pupils feel happy and safe. They learn about how to manage risks effectively, including when working or playing online. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens. If it does happen, they know that adults will help and support them.

Pupils are proud to attend St Mary's. They understand why coming to school every day matters. Pupils arrive with purpose and settle quickly. They speak with pride about the work they produce. Pupils know that staff expect them to work hard and behave well. Teachers challenge and support pupils to do their best. This creates an environment where pupils feel safe to take risks, make mistakes and learn from them. Leaders help pupils to know more and remember more. This helps to build pupils' confidence and independence. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, achieve well.

While St Mary's is proud of its Christian ethos, it also promotes the importance of different cultures and beliefs. This helps pupils to develop respect for diversity and difference. Consequently, pupils grow socially and morally alongside their academic learning. Pupils benefit from a rich range of wider opportunities. They talk enthusiastically about extra-curricular activities and leadership roles. These experiences help pupils to build confidence and resilience and to develop new interests. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they are articulate, respectful and well-rounded individuals. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for life beyond school.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently make highly effective choices across the curriculum about what to teach and how to teach it, so that pupils achieve even more

highly, including in the early years.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Leigh Foster.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other school leaders and staff during the inspection. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the diocese.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school was carried out in September 2023.

The school currently makes use of alternative provision, including one that is unregistered.

Headteacher: Jo McGarry

Lead inspector:

Nichola Tomkow, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sarah Gower-Jones, Ofsted Inspector

Alison Lawson, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

216

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

240

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

32.98%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.31%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.81%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	64%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	69%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	72%	61%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	50%	60%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	79%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	90%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	54%	73%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	71%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	72%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	76%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	71%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	77%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	79%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	86%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	64%	73%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	58%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	64%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	67%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	36%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	70%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	82%	63%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	83%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	36%	60%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	60%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	64%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	45%	58%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	73%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	82%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	45%	59%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	58%	68%	-10 pp
2024/25 (revised)	64%	69%	-6 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	67%	-1 pp
2022/23 (final)	36%	66%	-30 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	70%	80%	-10 pp
2024/25 (revised)	82%	81%	1 pp
2023/24 (final)	83%	80%	4 pp
2022/23 (final)	36%	78%	-42 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	60%	78%	-18 pp
2024/25 (revised)	64%	78%	-15 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	78%	-11 pp
2022/23 (final)	45%	77%	-32 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	73%	80%	-7 pp
2024/25 (revised)	82%	81%	1 pp
2023/24 (final)	83%	79%	4 pp
2022/23 (final)	45%	79%	-34 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	5.5%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.8%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.3%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	13.6%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	12.0%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.2%	16.2%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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