

St Mary's CofE Primary School

Address: Cornhill Rd, Davyhulme, Urmston, Manchester, M41 5TJ

Unique reference number (URN): 106349

Inspection report: 3 March 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.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour across the school are highly positive. Leaders promote regular attendance every day and act quickly when concerns arise. They analyse patterns closely and work with families to remove barriers through early help, parental support and reasonable adjustments. This includes targeted work with disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupils known to social care. Governors receive clear information about attendance trends and use this to challenge and support leaders' actions. As a result, overall attendance is high and improving. Pupils understand the importance of being in school.

Behaviour is guided by clear, consistently applied expectations and warm, respectful relationships. Pupils demonstrate high levels of self-control and move calmly around school, including during unstructured times, such as break and lunch. They enter worship quietly and show genuine consideration for one another. Pupils whose additional needs sometimes make them anxious speak confidently in front of large audiences because adults support them sensitively. Older pupils act as positive role models through buddy systems and lunchtime play leaders. In lessons, pupils are consistently engaged, motivated and proud of their work. Across all classes, pupils listen well, take turns, work cooperatively and show real enthusiasm for learning.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Inclusion is a central feature of the school and sits at the heart of leaders' vision for every child to succeed. Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately, supported by expertise in the early years and a qualified special educational needs coordinator. Training ensures staff have a secure understanding of pupils' needs, the barriers they may face and the strategies that help them to overcome these. Leaders work closely with families and external professionals so that support is well informed and joined up. They use pupil premium funding purposefully and collaborate with the virtual school to support pupils known, or previously known, to children's social care. Leaders maintain a clear oversight of any alternative provision and check that it meets pupils' needs.

Support across the school is varied and effective. Assistive technologies, coloured overlays and resources are adapted as pupils' needs change. Pastoral support consistently matches pupils' needs and reduces barriers to learning and wellbeing. Leaders monitor pupils' progress closely and review the impact of interventions so that support remains appropriate. As a result, disadvantaged pupils learn successfully alongside their peers. Pupils understand their own needs well, articulate the strategies that help them and take pride in the strengths they bring to the school community.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders are highly ambitious for pupils and set a clear vision to 'build a positive future for all'. They know the school well and identify accurate priorities for improvement. Their actions lead to sustained improvements, including recent work to secure a consistent approach to

handwriting and grammar so that pupils achieve as well as they can. Leaders make decisions that place pupils' education and wellbeing at the centre, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and pupils known, or previously known, to children's social care.

Governance is strategic and proactive. Governors draw on wide professional and lived experience, particularly in SEND, safeguarding and pastoral care. They meet their statutory duties and provide robust challenge and support. Governors scrutinise curriculum progression, behaviour and attendance, financial planning and staffing, ensuring that resources are used wisely and that leaders are held to account for the impact of their work.

Leaders ensure that all staff access a coherent, evidence-informed programme of professional learning that builds expertise over time. Staff benefit from high-quality training, including opportunities to complete nationally recognised professional qualifications and to develop specialist knowledge in areas, such as curriculum design, inclusion and pastoral support. Leaders are mindful of workload and wellbeing, adapting systems, where needed, so that expectations remain manageable.

Communication is a notable strength. Leaders engage openly with staff, pupils, parents and carers, ensuring a shared commitment to the school's inclusive ethos and ambition for every child. This collaborative approach enables pupils to thrive personally, socially and academically.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Pupils' personal development and support for their wellbeing is highly positive. Leaders have created a coherent, age-appropriate programme that is delivered consistently well and lived out daily through worship, class charters and restorative conversations. Pupils are reflective, articulate and increasingly independent in managing their feelings. Emotional wellbeing is supported extremely well and pupils access the 'Rainbow Room' for targeted support when needed. They explain how strategies that they learn help them to manage their emotions, resolve difficulties and build resilience.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a wide range of situations, including online, on the road and in emergencies. They use precise vocabulary, such as nicotine, addiction and puberty, showing a detailed understanding of how to keep their bodies and minds healthy. Relationships, sex and health education is taught sensitively and equips pupils with the knowledge they need to make informed choices as they grow up. Older pupils thrive in leadership roles, such as online safety ambassadors and learning circle leaders. They model responsible behaviours and support younger pupils to be reflective. Pupils understand about equality and discrimination and talk confidently about the fundamental British values of democracy and the rule of law. They show a deep respect for others.

Enrichment is inclusive and wide ranging. Pupils take part in community projects, sports festivals, arts events, trips and residential visits. They talk proudly about making a difference through eco-projects, charity work and supporting others. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities access the full offer and benefit from it.

Transitions into, through and beyond the school are carefully planned so that pupils feel secure and ready for their next steps. The school's approach enables pupils to flourish personally, socially and emotionally, preparing them very well for life beyond primary school.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

By the end of Year 6, pupils' results in national reading, writing and mathematics tests are broadly in line with the national average. Leaders understand that some pupils do not reach the higher standard because gaps in handwriting, spelling and grammar limit the accuracy and fluency needed for greater depth. Younger pupils also achieve securely in the phonics screening and multiplication checks, reflecting their steady progress through the curriculum.

Pupils build their knowledge and understanding across subjects. Their work shows that most remember important ideas and apply them with increasing confidence. Disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils known to social care make effective progress from their starting points because staff understand their needs and provide suitable support. By the time they leave this school, pupils are ready for the next stage of their education and move to secondary school with the foundations they need to continue learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Pupils follow a curriculum that leaders have designed to build knowledge securely from the early years to Year 6. Leaders review the quality of the curriculum regularly and make informed decisions about how to strengthen it. They ensure that subjects are sensibly sequenced, so that pupils revisit important ideas and encounter new concepts in a logical order. Teachers use clear subject knowledge to explain new learning and introduce vocabulary accurately. This helps pupils to connect ideas across topics, such as understanding time zones in geography or developing shading techniques in art.

Teachers reflect a shared understanding of what pupils need to learn and how knowledge develops over time. Staff know their pupils well and adapt tasks so that disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those known to social care can take part fully. Leaders check where pupils have gaps in their knowledge and provide additional teaching to help them catch up, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, support for securing accurate handwriting, spelling and grammar is not yet consistent across the school. Leaders recognise this and are refining the curriculum, so that pupils gain the strong foundations they need to access learning confidently in every subject.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders in the early years create a warm, well-organised and nurturing environment. Children are safe, confident and ready to learn. Adults know the children well and work closely with parents and carers, from home visits before children start to regular

conversations throughout the year. This strong partnership ensures everyone understands each child's needs and interests.

Children who attend the Nursery settle quickly because routines, stories and activities are carefully matched to their age and stage. Staff consider children's starting points and adapt learning for those who need extra help, including disadvantaged children, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children known to social care. As a result, every child can take part and feel included.

Story times, early mathematics sessions and daily routines are thoughtfully designed. Staff support children by modelling language clearly and asking questions that help them to think, talk and explore ideas. Leaders recognise the need to strengthen progression in vocabulary between Nursery and Reception, ensuring new words are introduced, displayed and practised consistently across all areas of the provision.

Reading is prioritised. In Reception, children learn phonics from the start and practise blending sounds through books that are well matched to their age and stage. By the end of Reception, most children are ready for Year 1 with the secure routines and early knowledge that they need.

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

Pupils at St Mary's are proud to be part of a caring, inclusive and ambitious school community, where they 'make a difference' each and every day. Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their positive attendance. Pupils are safe and secure. They are cared for by adults who know them extremely well. Pupils learn about online safety and state there is always someone they can talk to if they have any worries. New pupils, including those who arrive from overseas, are welcomed warmly and settle quickly.

Pupils behave well. When rare instances of bullying or unkindness happen, staff deal with it promptly and help pupils to repair relationships. Pupils say adults listen and sort things out fairly. From the early years onwards, they learn clear routines and use shared strategies to manage their feelings. Calm spaces, breathing techniques and 'stop and think' prompts are embedded in the fabric of the school.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning. They enjoy creative projects and 'fabulous finishes' and share this work proudly with families. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and take pride in producing high-quality work that shows what they have remembered. Pupils achieve well. They get off to a positive start in early reading and phonics. Staff foster a love of books that support pupils' understanding of diversity, equity and difference. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged learn the full curriculum and receive the support they need to succeed. Staff understand pupils' barriers to learning and adapt teaching so that everyone can take part.

Pupils belong to a community that values character, kindness and responsibility. They campaign for environmental change and plant bulbs in the local area to make others smile.

Pupils show compassion, confidence and a sense of fairness. They leave St Mary's as thoughtful, articulate young people, ready for the next stage of their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that gaps in pupils' transcriptional skills and grammar knowledge are addressed consistently across the curriculum, so that pupils develop the accuracy and fluency needed to achieve as well as they can.
 - Leaders should refine the delivery of the early years curriculum so that vocabulary development follows a clear and progressive sequence from Nursery to Reception, enabling staff to deepen children's language learning and maximise opportunities to practise and apply new words across the provision.
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About this inspection

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 (HMs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator during the inspection. Inspectors spoke with representatives of the governing body, local authority and diocese.

Inspectors spoke with pupils, staff, parents and carers during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The last section 48 inspection took place in October 2023.

The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.

Headteacher : Alison Daniel

Lead inspector:

Sue Dymond, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Nicky Parkinson, Ofsted Inspector

Ruth Baldwin, His Majesty's 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 3 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

184

Below 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

210

Below 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)

15.25%

Below 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

4.89%

Above 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

18.48%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well below 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	65%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	63%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	69%	60%	Above

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	81%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	70%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	81%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	91%	73%	Above

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	78%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	74%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	78%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	81%	71%	Above

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	73%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	78%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	66%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	75%	73%	Close to average

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	61%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	63%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	57%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	72%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	63%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	72%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	63%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	61%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	63%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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	61%	68%	-7 pp
2024/25 (revised)	63%	69%	-7 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	67%	-10 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	72%	80%	-7 pp
2024/25 (revised)	63%	81%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	71%	80%	-8 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	72%	78%	-6 pp
2024/25 (revised)	63%	78%	-16 pp
2023/24 (final)	71%	78%	-6 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	61%	80%	-19 pp
2024/25 (revised)	63%	81%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	79%	-22 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been

mirrored and applied in the report card.

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)	3.8%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.1%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.6%	5.9%	Below

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)	5.9%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	8.1%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	7.8%	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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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