

Inspection of St Hilda’s CofE Primary School

Tilbury Street, Oldham, Lancashire OL1 2HJ

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and settled at this school. They told inspectors that they are proud to be part of the school's community. Pupils value the relationships that they quickly develop with their peers and with staff.

In recent years, the school has taken the necessary steps to establish a culture where there are high expectations for what pupils can and should achieve. This shift has improved pupils' own aspirations for their achievement and for their future lives. For example, pupils aspire to become teachers, surgeons, scientists and police officers. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, typically learn well.

Pupils behave well during lessons and at social times. They aim to follow the school's values, for example by respecting others. Pupils understand equality issues and the importance of treating everybody fairly. In their roles as mental health champions, pupils have had training to help support and look after their peers.

The school provides pupils with a variety of rich experiences. For instance, pupils recently relished a live music concert in school. They look forward to residential trips and visits, including to the church, to choral performances and to the local council chambers. Pupils enjoy participating in various after-school activities. These include sports, dance, art and gardening clubs.

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

The school and the governing body have placed a strong focus on bringing about the required changes to improve the curriculum following the previous inspection. While these changes have been successful, published data belies the strengths of the school. In 2023, pupils' attainment in some subjects was significantly below national averages. A considerable number of pupils joined the school at various times in each key stage and speak English as an additional language. Nonetheless, most current pupils are achieving well.

The school has a suitably ambitious curriculum. In most subjects, it has identified and ordered logically the important knowledge that pupils should learn. However, in some subjects, the precise knowledge that pupils should acquire and how this should build over time is not clear. This limits the depth of some pupils' knowledge.

Most staff demonstrate strong subject knowledge and give clear explanations during lessons, particularly in subjects where curriculum thinking is more robust. In these subjects, staff select suitable activities to successfully deliver curriculum content. They check effectively what pupils have remembered. However, from time to time, teachers do not choose learning activities that enable pupils to learn the intended curriculum well. This hinders some pupils from learning all that they should.

The school quickly identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND as soon as they start in the early years. Staff work effectively with external agencies, and with parents and carers, to support these pupils to access the full curriculum.

The curriculum is centred around high-quality texts. The school encourages pupils to read widely and often. Pupils enjoy visiting the school's well-stocked library. They look forward to taking part in reading challenges and achieving reading rewards. Pupils perform poetry during assemblies, and they share books with younger pupils.

In the early years, children listen to a wide range of stories, poems, songs and rhymes. Staff introduce carefully chosen vocabulary and revisit this during different learning contexts. This prepares children well for the start of Reception Year when they begin to learn phonics. Staff are trained to implement the phonics programme consistently well. Pupils read from books that contain the sounds that they already know. Staff provide additional help for pupils who find reading difficult and for those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils typically become fluent and confident readers by the end of Year 6.

The school is proactive in ensuring that pupils attend well. Reasons for any non-attendance are known and the school works well with parents to foster regular attendance habits. Pupils understand the importance of being in school and they have positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils are well mannered and polite, which contributes to calm and purposeful classroom environments.

Pupils benefit from a well-designed programme that supports their personal development. They learn how to be safe outside of school and how to protect their physical and mental health. Pupils develop their leadership skills through fundraising and various roles such as school councillors and play leaders. Some pupils have had specific training from the church to lead the school's collective worship.

Most staff are committed to assisting the school on its continual improvement journey. They appreciate being part of a close-knit team. Staff feel supported to fulfil their roles well, including by having their workload considered by the school. They appreciate the training and many coaching opportunities that they have.

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 school has not determined the important information that pupils should learn and how this knowledge should build over time. This hinders some pupils from developing a deep body of knowledge. The school should

identify all the essential information that pupils should learn and when this will happen.

- At times, teachers do not select the most appropriate activities when delivering subject-specific content. This limits how well some pupils learn the intended curriculum. The school should ensure that teachers carefully choose activities that help pupils to learn as well as they should.

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	105702
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10289894
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	395
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elizabeth Scoltock
Headteacher	Patricia Burton
Website	www.sthildas.oldham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils.
- This Church of England School is in the Diocese of Manchester. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was in February 2020. The school is awaiting confirmation from the diocese about its next section 48 inspection.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than the national average.
- A considerable number of pupils arrive at the school at different points during the year.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's

education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, English, history and art and design. In each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and visited a sample of lessons. They spoke with teachers and with some pupils about their learning. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work. They also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult. He discussed reading with a group of older pupils.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders of the school. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school, including at playtime, during lunchtime and at breakfast club. They spoke with several groups of pupils about their experiences at school and considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and documents pertaining to pupils' behaviour and levels of attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and their well-being. They considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. An inspector met with some parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

David Lobodzinski, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Haroon Asghar	Ofsted Inspector
Lisa Hesmondhalgh	Ofsted Inspector

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