

Inspection of St Monica's RC High School, a Voluntary Academy

Bury Old Road, Prestwich, Manchester, Greater Manchester M25 1JH

Inspection dates:	21 and 22 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Emma Keenan. This school is part of St Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Chris Foley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Marie Garside.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils' experience of school has been transformed since the last inspection. Pupils and staff value highly the positive shift in culture that has been fostered across all areas of school life. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

The school's curriculum is highly ambitious for all pupils. There are high expectations for what pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve. Pupils work hard and show committed attitudes to their learning. They are keen to succeed. Pupils achieve well, including in national examinations.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour that are consistently taught, reinforced, and embedded in school routines. Everyone in the school appreciates this consistent approach to behaviour. Pupils understand what is expected of them. They behave well in lessons and at social times. This has helped to create a respectful and cohesive learning community.

Pupils say that this is a school where everyone's differences are accepted and everyone is equal. They celebrate diversity and learn about different faiths, cultures and perspectives. For example, pupils spoke with relish about 'culture week'. Such activities contribute well to the respectful values upheld in the school.

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

Pupils study a broad and rich curriculum. In each subject, the school has designed the curriculum carefully, breaking learning down into manageable steps. These steps help pupils to build new knowledge based on what they already know. This supports pupils to remember important learning from previous years and to make links across topics.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They embrace opportunities to learn from each other and from colleagues across the trust. As a result, there is a consistent approach to teaching. Pupils benefit from lessons that are structured according to the school's research-led methods. Teachers select tasks that help pupils revisit, practise and embed important ideas well.

Teachers use a range of strategies to check pupils' learning. They identify and address pupils' misconceptions well. Mostly, this ensures that pupils consolidate their knowledge before moving on to new learning. Most pupils build their knowledge and skills securely over time.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND accurately and communicates these effectively to teachers. However, some teachers are less certain about how to make appropriate adaptations to activities which enable all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have lower rates of attendance, to learn the curriculum successfully.

The school has an effective system in place for pinpointing the reading ability of all pupils. It has implemented a structured reading programme which ensures that pupils who are

not confident or fluent readers receive support swiftly. All teachers focus on developing pupils' specialist vocabulary. Pupils value how 'word of the week' is helping them to use more sophisticated vocabulary across subjects.

The school has a unified approach to supporting positive behaviour. Its behaviour policy is widely understood and implemented well. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful. Pupils are confident that staff will challenge any unpleasant behaviour successfully. In recent times, the number of suspensions has reduced significantly.

Overall, the school has successfully ensured that pupils' attendance remains high. As a result, most pupils attend school regularly and on time. However, this is not always the case for some disadvantaged pupils and for some pupils with SEND. This is having a negative effect on the achievement of some of these pupils.

The school prepares pupils very well for life beyond school. Over time, pupils develop an understanding of key topics such as the importance of healthy relationships. Pupils are encouraged to be active citizens in their school and local community. For example, they coordinate charitable events to support local homelessness organisations. The school has a comprehensive careers programme in place which supports pupils to make aspirational and well-informed decisions about their next steps in education or training.

Leaders accurately identify the school's strengths and what could be even better. Trustees and governors provide valuable support and challenge. This has helped the school to go from strength to strength. Pupils, their parents and carers, and staff appreciate clear communication about what is happening and why. This ensures that the school's actions have the support and trust of its community. Staff, including teachers new to the profession, believe that leaders are considerate of their workload and ready to listen to their views. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, the implementation of the curriculum is not adapted well enough to meet the needs of some pupils, including those with SEND or those who are disadvantaged. This makes it more difficult for these pupils to learn the required curriculum content. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to select the most effective strategies to support these pupils to learn well.
- Some groups of pupils, including some who are disadvantaged and some with SEND, do not attend school regularly enough. This further exacerbates the gaps in these

pupils' learning. The school should ensure that these pupils are supported to improve their rates of attendance and punctuality.

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	148050
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10361896
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1069
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marie Garside
CEO of the trust	Chris Foley
Headteacher	Emma Keenan
Website	www.stmonicas.stoccat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 July 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Salford. Its most recent section 48 inspection for schools of religious character took place in February 2024. The next section 48 is due to take place before the end of 2029.
- The school is part of St Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Academy Trust.
- The school uses one registered and two unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 and/or sixth form

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. They also spoke with members of the trust and members of the local governing body, including the chair. In addition, an inspector spoke with a representative of the diocese and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, history, science and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects, looked at samples of pupils' work and visited a sample of lessons.
- An inspector met with the leaders for SEND and reviewed samples of documentation related to pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 reviewed a range of documents, including policies and analyses of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke to some pupils and staff about the school. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lunchtimes and breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors also considered the views of parents expressed through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Kate Bowker, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul Slater	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Wright	Ofsted Inspector
Paula Crawley	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025