

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Rockingham Close, Uxbridge UB8 2UA

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 March 2024

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

The school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 12 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at that time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this nurturing and supportive school. They are proud of attending St Mary's with its inclusive ethos and are kept safe here. Staff work in very close partnership with parents and carers and the wider community to provide a positive experience for all pupils.

The school develops pupils' knowledge and confidence through a broad curriculum. Pupils achieve well in their learning, especially in English and mathematics. This is because the school has high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They listen attentively, are highly motivated and show respect and kindness towards adults and each other. From the early years onwards, pupils learn to identify their emotions and how to support others.

The school develops pupils' independence and character. From early years, all pupils readily take on leadership responsibilities as prefects, by helping at breaktimes or through older pupils listening to their younger peers read. Pupils appreciate, and are encouraged to attend, the wide range of clubs designed to develop their talents and interests. These include chess, choir, art, curling, basketball and Spanish.

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

The school has an ambitious curriculum. It is well sequenced, enabling pupils, including those with SEND, to build their knowledge cumulatively as they move through the school. For example, in geography, pupils learn to read plans and maps at different scales. This helps them to interpret maps successfully when completing fieldwork visits. Similarly, in computing, pupils practise coding. This supports them to deal with increasingly complex algorithms later on.

In early years, staff provide high levels of support for children to develop their language and communication skills within a purposeful environment. This supports children to flourish and prepares them well for learning to read and write. The school's focus on early reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils learn to read using phonics from the start of Reception. Teachers make sure that pupils read books which match the sounds they know. This ensures that pupils, including those at the early stages of reading, develop the knowledge and skills they need to read with fluency. Teachers swiftly identify pupils who are not as confident and put in place a range of appropriate support. This results in pupils, including those with SEND or who are new to English, becoming confident and enthusiastic readers who achieve highly. The school exposes pupils to a diverse range of high-quality texts and authors in its popular 'library bus'. Reading is embedded in all subjects. For example, pupils read the novel 'The Wind in the Willows', which contributes to their understanding about rivers in geography.

Teachers are well trained and have strong subject knowledge. They ensure that activities are adapted appropriately to meet individual pupils' needs. Although assessment is generally used well, sometimes, checks on pupils' understanding are not as precise as they could be. This means that teaching does not consistently identify and fully address gaps or misconceptions in learning. As a result, some pupils, including those with SEND, struggle to remember and apply what they are learning in the long term. Leaders recognise this and are putting appropriate plans in place to address the issue.

The school has established a comprehensive programme to support pupils' personal development. Teachers approach sensitive topics such as healthy relationships with care. They encourage pupils to debate such topics and consider other points of view. Pupils are taught how to keep safe, including when online. Central to the school's ethos is a sense of service to others. Pupils make a significant contribution to their local community. For example, each year group chooses a charity to support, such as homelessness and a local food bank.

Leaders have robust systems for ensuring that pupils attend school regularly and on time. They work with families and other agencies to ensure that pupils' welfare is carefully monitored. As a result, pupils have high attendance.

Staff love working at St Mary's Catholic Primary School. They are proud to work in a place which cares for them and one which has such a strong 'family' ethos. They appreciate the many professional development opportunities on offer. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities, including safeguarding, well. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education at the school but also consider staff welfare. Parents and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about 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)

- In some subjects, assessment is not used as precisely to check what pupils know and remember. As a result, errors and misconceptions in pupils' understanding are not identified and addressed swiftly. This means some pupils do not secure the knowledge they need to tackle more complex ideas later on. The school should ensure that pupils' understanding of important ideas is checked consistently across the curriculum.

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	102425
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10296607
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	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Maureen Thorpe
Headteacher	Ann Shevlin
Website	www.st-marys.hillingdon.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 May 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school has a Roman Catholic religious character. The school had its last section 48 inspection by the Diocese of Westminster in February 2024.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with members of the governing body and spoke with a representative from the Diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, computing and geography. They met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, and spoke with teachers and pupils. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work. The curriculum in other subjects was also considered as part of the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the 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 gathered the views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff through both discussion and their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Susan Maguire, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gaynor Roberts

His Majesty's Inspector

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