

Inspection of a good school: St Mary's Catholic Primary School

High Street, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 4EJ

Inspection dates:

4–5 February 2020

Outcome

St Mary's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school has a real sense of family. Pupils are excellent school ambassadors. Their good behaviour and thoughtfulness reflect the school's Catholic values and ethos. Parents and carers speak highly of the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe and well cared for. They look out for each other. They say that 'you'll always have a friend to play with, but if you feel lonely there are people who'll help you'. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying but know that adults will handle any problems quickly.

Sometimes, pupils join the school from another country and cannot speak much English. Staff make sure that these pupils get great support to help them develop their English skills. Staff speak a range of different languages and this helps pupils settle. Older pupils also become buddies for younger pupils.

Staff want pupils to do their best at school. They make sure that pupils work hard. As a result, pupils are doing well, especially in mathematics and phonics. Pupils also enjoy fun activities. They work together on the school and eco councils. They spoke with enthusiasm about the school choir, and about trips to Alton Castle and the Houses of Parliament.

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

Right from the start, children find out that learning is fun at St Mary's. They develop their early skills in a stimulating environment. Staff make activities interesting and engaging. For example, children use their writing and mathematical skills when admitting animals to the play hospital. They complete an admissions form, weigh the injured animal and decide on the right treatment. By the end of Reception, most children are achieving a good level of development.

Leaders know that reading is the gateway to knowledge. The school provides a reading-rich environment. There is well-stocked library. Each class has a reading area with good-quality books. Phonics is taught well. Teachers ensure that pupils are reading books that

match their phonics knowledge. Those pupils who need extra help to read receive it. Last year, outcomes in the phonics screening check were high.

Leaders and staff have developed a well-sequenced curriculum that is based on the national curriculum. Pupils build on knowledge and skills in a sequenced and coherent way. In mathematics, pupils revisit different concepts over time. This is because teachers know that this helps pupils to remember more. Pupils use practical materials to help them with their understanding of tricky concepts. Pupils frequently practise applying different mathematical skills to improve their fluency and understanding.

The science curriculum is also well sequenced. Pupils enjoy putting their investigative skills into practice. Pupils in Year 5 talked confidently about their science investigation of filtering. They demonstrated their understanding of vocabulary such as 'permeable' and 'soluble'. Planning for history and geography develops historical knowledge and skills coherently. Other curriculum areas are suitably planned and sequenced.

Pupils take pride in their work and present it well. Sometimes, though, when pupils make mistakes, teachers are not quick enough to pick these up and find out if pupils have misunderstood something. This means that pupils sometimes continue to repeat their errors. Teachers do not always check that pupils have completed work that they have been asked to do.

Teachers meet the wide-ranging abilities of pupils in their classes well. They use assessment effectively to identify pupils' next steps in learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get the help they need because of effective support from well-trained staff.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to build their self-confidence and resilience. Every child leads a class assembly during their time in school. Pupils talked about how this helps them feel more confident to speak in front of an audience. Pupils raise money for the local community. They recently made and sold bird feeders to support the local wildlife trust. They know the importance of keeping healthy. They take part in different sports and a swimming gala. While pupils have a good understanding of their own faith, they are less knowledgeable about other faiths and beliefs. Their knowledge about some of the protected characteristics set out in The Equality Act 2010 is also limited.

The strong, consistent leadership of the school has helped to maintain the good standards of education at St Mary's. The headteacher, well supported by the chair of governors, continues the drive for improvement. She wants the pupils to achieve the best they can. She is considerate of staff workload and well-being. Members of the multi-academy company have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide effective oversight. They ensure that they hold leaders to account for the school's performance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make appropriate pre-employment checks on new staff to make sure they are suitable to work with children. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and her deputy are suitably trained in their roles. They ensure that staff receive annual safeguarding training as well as regular updates to ensure that pupils are kept safe from harm. Records are kept securely. Staff know how to report concerns about pupils' welfare.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum. They know about online safety, cyber bullying and road safety. Visits from local police community support officers help pupils to understand any local risks.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, teachers do not follow up pupils' misconceptions in their work. They do not make sure that pupils are finishing work that they have been asked to complete. This means that pupils are at risk of repeating errors over time. They may also be missing out on some learning and have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers quickly intervene to address any misconceptions pupils may have. They should assure themselves that teachers are checking that unfinished work is followed up and completed.
- While pupils have a good knowledge of their own faith, their knowledge of other faiths and beliefs is limited. As a result, pupils do not have all the tools they need to be able to understand and accept different faiths and beliefs. Leaders should ensure that pupils are given opportunities to deepen their understanding of the range of different faiths and beliefs that exist beyond their own personal faith.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that pupils have been given sufficient opportunities to learn about all of the different protected characteristics set out in The Equality Act 2010. As a result, pupils have a limited knowledge of some of these characteristics. Leaders and governors should ensure that pupils know about all of the protected characteristics and the importance of non-discrimination.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Mary's Catholic Primary School, to be good on 12–13 February 2014.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143636
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10122521
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	182
Appropriate authority	Board of directors
Chair	Eric Kirwan
Headteacher	Jacqueline Smith
Website	www.stmarysrc.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Mary's is one of six schools in the Holy Family Catholic Multi-Academy Company.
- Over half of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school has a Catholic ethos.

Information about this inspection

- I met with senior and subject leaders to discuss the work of the school. I looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, improvement planning, curriculum plans and schemes of work.
- I met with the chair of governors and spoke to the diocesan deputy director of education on the telephone. I met with the chief executive officer and the accounting officer from the multi-academy company.
- I met with the special educational needs coordinator and the leader of the early years provision.
- I met with the DSL to discuss safeguarding information. I looked at confidential files relating to pupils' welfare, as well as information about behaviour and attendance. I

looked at the checks that leaders make on staff before they are appointed to the school.

- I met with a group of pupils representing the school council, eco council, and prayer leaders. I also talked to pupils informally during lesson visits and at breaktime.
- I spoke to several parents at the end of the first day of the inspection. I also considered the 31 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online parent survey, and the 22 free-text responses.
- I considered the 41 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey and the 11 responses to the staff survey.
- I focused on reading, mathematics and science. I met with senior and subject leaders to discuss how the curriculum is planned and sequenced, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to teachers from the lessons visited. I listened to a small number of pupils read.

Inspection team

Deb Jenkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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