

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Westgate Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 5DE

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

The school is a single academy trust that sits within the Bromley Catholic Schools Trust. The headteacher of this school is Isobel Vassallo. The school is overseen by a governing body, chaired by Robin Hoyles.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this exceptional school. Kindness is at the centre of the culture. Pupils are confident, polite, and extremely hard working. They have a passion for learning and are very happy in school.

Working relationships between staff and pupils are entirely positive. Staff know their pupils very well. This ensures pupils are safe in school. Staff have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This enables pupils to excel.

Pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school site is exemplary. They are rightly proud of their school and support each other well. Leaders focus on the development of pupils' character. The Catholic ethos in the school is pivotal to the values. Pupils understand these well and embody them through their actions.

Pupils have access to an extremely broad range of wider opportunities in the school. Most pupils access the many clubs on offer. There is an extremely broad range of sports teams to take part in including taekwondo, hockey and Gaelic football. Many pupils learn musical instruments and there are a wide range of performance opportunities. Pupils support a number of local and national charities through funding raising activities and collections for the local foodbank.

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

Leaders have developed a highly ambitious curriculum that supports all pupils, including those with SEND, to achieve well. This is because knowledge is well-sequenced to deepen pupils' understanding over time. For example, in mathematics, leaders have identified and developed specific areas of the curriculum to ensure pupils know and remember more. Several new strategies have been put in place to improve pupils' retention of knowledge. As a result, the impact in mathematics is extremely strong, in line with other subjects in the school.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and present information very clearly. They make extremely effective adaptations to ensure that pupils with SEND access the curriculum successfully. Teachers routinely check pupils' understanding and address any misconceptions swiftly. This ensures that all pupils have a secure understanding before moving onto new learning. In early years, teachers are highly skilled at ensuring children develop their communication skills. Staff continuously develop and embed the children's vocabulary through a wide range of well-chosen activities.

Leaders have placed a sharp focus on the teaching of early reading. All staff are well trained in delivering the phonics programme. Staff teach phonics consistently to a high standard. They continuously check pupils' understanding and swiftly put support in place to ensure pupils do not fall behind the pace of the programme.

Pupils regularly read a wide range of texts. Books that pupils take home are matched closely to the phonic sounds that they know. Pupils are confident reading out loud and do so with expression and enthusiasm. They demonstrate a genuine love of reading. Leaders work closely with parents and carers to ensure they are able to support their children to read at home.

Pupils have exceptional attitudes to their learning. They are focussed, enthusiastic and resilient if they find something difficult. Children in early years are highly motivated. They share well and show respect for each other. The attendance of pupils in school is extremely high. Leaders work effectively with parents and have robust strategies in place to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

The school's personal development curriculum has been coherently planned to ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding deepen and build over time. For example, pupils develop a strong understanding of how to stay healthy and safe, including online.

Pupils attend a very broad range of outings each year. These are extremely well planned to ensure these visits further enhance the ambitious curriculum and support pupils to develop other important character traits. Pupils readily take on leadership roles, including as student chaplains or digital leaders.

Leaders have developed a comprehensive professional development programme. This leads to sustained and continuous improvement in the quality of education. The governing body understands the strengths and priorities of the school and carries out its role effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	141535
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10323403
Type of school	Primary school
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	406
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Robin Hoyles
Headteacher	Isobel Vassallo
Website	www.st-marys-catholic.bromley.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 May 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Mary's Primary School has a Catholic ethos.
- The school's last section 48 inspection took place in June 2019.
- The school do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector 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 second routine inspection the school has 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 met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and a range of staff. They also met with members of the governing body, and a representative from the Diocese of Southwark.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, art, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, discussed with pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work. The curriculum in other subjects was also considered.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 considered the views of parents, pupils, and staff, including through responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Simon Conway, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Frances Hawkes	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Pratt	Ofsted Inspector

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