

# St Mary's Hare Park School

South Drive, Gidea Park, Romford, RM2 6HH

**Inspection dates** 8–10 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Early years provision	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings

### This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Her pursuit of excellence has secured outstanding teaching, achievement, and personal development of all pupils.
- Working collaboratively with the headteacher, the trustees have made sure that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders at all levels, under the guidance of the inspirational headteacher, have successfully built on previous strengths to improve the school's performance still further. This includes the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. Their passion for their subjects ignites pupils' curiosity and love of learning. As a result, all groups of learners make rapid progress, including in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Their exemplary attitudes to their learning and their work ethic are major contributors to their outstanding achievement.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded through all areas of the school's work. Pupils have a mature appreciation of the wide range of cultural differences within school and beyond. They are exceptionally well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school's safeguarding procedures are robust and protect pupils from potential risks or harm. Pupils are kept very safe.
- The provision for early years is outstanding. Children quickly acquire skills to help them become resilient, responsive and cooperative learners. Nonetheless, some opportunities are lost for children to extend their learning further in the outdoor areas.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was conducted without notice to the school, at the request of the Department for Education, the registration authority for independent schools.
- Inspectors observed the quality of teaching in 15 lessons across all key stages, conducted a learning walk, listened to two groups of pupils reading, and scrutinised samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects.
- Discussions were held with the vice chair of the trust, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, two groups of pupils, and two groups of parents.
- School policies, documents and records were perused and discussed, including those related to safeguarding.
- There were too few responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, for their views to be representative. Inspectors examined the school's own parents' survey and took account of the results of surveys from 35 staff. Inspectors also looked at three letters from parents.

## Inspection team

Mary Hinds, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Joanna Jones

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Mary's Hare Park School and Nursery is an independent Catholic school for boys and girls aged from two to 11 years. There are 178 pupils on roll.
- The early years provision is made up of three classes. Most nursery children also attend full time. Nursery-aged children are split into two classes, with the first being 'pre-nursery' for children aged between two-and-a-half to three-and-a-half years of age who can attend on a part- or full-time basis. Currently, there are four children attending on a part-time basis and eight children who are full time. The second nursery class is for children aged between three-and-a-half to four years or more, which the school calls the 'reception class'. All of these children attend full time. Children in Reception attend full time. The school calls this the 'transition class'.
- The school opened in 1926 and moved to its current premises in Gidea Park, Romford in 1935. In 1964 the Sisters of Mercy purchased the school and on the withdrawal of the Order, in 1988, the school became a non-profitable trust.
- The school does not have a governing body. There are five trustees who have oversight of the school's performance.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is well below average. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- Pupils are from a wide range of ethnic heritages, although most are from a White British background.
- Pupils transfer to a number of state and independent secondary schools at the age of 11.
- The school's last inspection was a 'light touch' inspection in September 2008, when it was judged to provide an outstanding quality of education.
- The school's ethos aims to provide a balanced programme of educational activities and experiences to develop each child's full potential, within a caring atmosphere.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the early years outdoor area still further by making sure that:
  - there are always labels and captions which stimulate learning
  - planned activities always develop key skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has high aspirations for everyone in the school. She is totally driven to secure the very best for all pupils, both academically and personally. She has no time for complacency. As a result, the school has built successfully on previous strengths and has secured even further improvements since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher has created a culture of self-belief, where pupils and adults are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential, irrespective of their background, ability or gender. As a result, equality of opportunity is secured for all and discrimination is prevented at all levels. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully, including those vulnerable pupils who, for a variety of reasons, are at risk of underachieving. Their progress, both academically and personally, is boosted with additional teaching and/or nurturing. All pupils thrive in the school.
- The quality of teaching has been strengthened and, as a result, pupils achieve the highest levels of attainment in almost all areas of the curriculum. Pupils develop into mature, responsible and thoughtful learners who contribute significantly to their school community and beyond.
- The judicious appointment of senior and middle leaders has bolstered the capacity of the leadership team. All take full responsibility for their areas of deployment and contribute significantly to school improvement, including the quality of teaching, the curriculum, assessment and pupil achievement.
- Staff are provided with effective training and professional development linked to the school's priorities and their own personal targets for improvement. Staff have good professional development and often undertake specific courses resulting in further professional qualifications. Incentives reward high performance.
- The school has fostered highly effective partnerships. The link with the local authority has secured accurate assessments in the early years. Staff work closely with parents, who are totally confident of the school's ability to promote their child's welfare and education. Leaders are very proactive in their work with outside agencies to support and protect potentially vulnerable families and pupils who are experiencing trauma or hardship.
- The quality of the curriculum is outstanding and successfully meets the needs and interests of all pupils and provides an outstanding preparation for life beyond school. It promotes high levels of pupil engagement and motivation. Pupils study a wide range of subjects, all taught by outstanding teachers, some of whom are specialists, including in information and communication technology (ICT), French, art, music, drama and sport. Extra opportunities before and after school enrich pupils' learning still further. These are taught by teachers and external providers.
- Pupils told inspectors they voluntarily choose to attend additional booster classes before school, including mathematics, because they are keen to improve and achieve as much as they can. Pupils are taught key life skills, such as speaking in public confidently and fluently. They are able to debate articulately and with conviction. Many pupils excel in externally accredited examinations.
- Both the school's ethos and the curriculum contribute exceptionally well to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils are constantly encouraged to reflect on their learning and their behaviour. They are acutely aware of current political and global issues that highlight social, moral and ethical dilemmas. Pupils are exceptionally well-prepared for adult life and to contribute positively to British society.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Trustees are well-informed about the school's strengths and priorities for improvement, including the quality of teaching. They are kept informed through regular informal discussions and meetings. Although small in number, all trustees have responsibilities for areas of the school's performance, including safeguarding, recruitment, health and safety, finance and premises. They demand high standards in all areas of the school's performance and have made sure that all the independent school standards are consistently met. Together with the headteacher, and supported by another member of the senior management team, they ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and that procedures are robust.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding****Behaviour**

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils love their lessons and learning new things. They can hardly wait to immerse themselves in their work. Their high levels of motivation and commitment to work hard promote their rapid progress and high attainment.
- Pupils work well on their own or in groups. They are exceptionally cooperative and help one another without any prompting from adults. They are extremely polite and respectful. On the rare occasions when they do upset one another, they will automatically apologise unreservedly. Adults have high expectations for behaviour and pupils who excel are rewarded in many ways, including being recognised as 'citizen of the year'.
- Pupils make a major contribution to the school, the local and wider community. Older pupils are 'play buddies' and look after younger pupils. The school council is a significant partner in school improvement; for example, the members instigated a quiet corner in the playground.
- Pupils have a heightened awareness of all forms of bullying and appreciate their role in how to prevent it. There are posters designed by pupils around the school reminding everyone of their role in preventing bullying. As a result, bullying is rare.
- The school community is multicultural. Pupils from a wide range of cultural and social backgrounds work and play in harmony. Pupils talk animatedly about the visits they have made to a wide variety of places of worship. This, together with religious studies, successfully promotes pupils' understanding, tolerance, respect and appreciation of all differences.
- Pupils are involved in many charitable ventures. At a local level, the choir have sung at the Waldorf Hotel to raise funds for the Barnardo's charity. Both staff and pupils took part in a sponsored walk, 'Help Freddie walk tall', for cerebral palsy. Further afield, they support schools in Uganda and the West Indies.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe is outstanding. Pupils know how to keep safe, including when using the internet. The school systematically provides regular awareness e-safety training for both pupils and parents. Pupils told inspectors, 'Talking to someone you don't know (online) is like talking to a stranger and opening your door to anyone...'
- Pupils know how to identify and manage potential risks because the school makes safeguarding and protecting pupils from danger a top priority. All staff have up-to-date training, which reflects the latest 2015 guidance issued by the Department for Education. Policies and procedures, including those relating to child protection, safer recruitment, and health and safety, are regularly monitored and reviewed to make sure that implementation is effective in securing the welfare and safety of pupils.
- The school's premises and accommodation are also compliant against the independent school standards, providing well equipped and well maintained classrooms, with large outdoor areas for play and sport.

**The quality of teaching is outstanding**

- Teachers tap into pupils' innate curiosity by planning activities which are relevant and motivating. They have excellent subject knowledge and impart this methodically. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils worked out the value of a variable in an equation. The teacher systematically checked every pupil's understanding, emphasising the correct mathematical vocabulary before moving their learning on. Pupils reinforce their own learning by compiling their own notebooks with key mathematical concepts to support their current learning and to use in their secondary schools.
- The learning culture is highly positive and creative. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils were teaching each other how to find the right product using multiplication, via a game they had designed themselves. The teacher constantly checked pupils' understanding, reassuring pupils that the process is far more important than the answer. As a result, pupils were confident to have a go and made outstanding progress.
- The school has designed a curriculum and schemes of work that take into account the new National Curriculum. They use regular assessments to plan and build on what pupils can already do in order to make them think hard. There is no 'glass ceiling' to dictate what pupils learn about. All year groups are working at levels that are at least one year ahead of what is expected nationally.
- Teachers identify what pupils need to do next in their learning. This feedback enables pupils to focus on what they need to work on next to move their learning on.
- Pupils read for pleasure. Younger pupils have good comprehension skills. They talk about characterisation and the plot accurately. Older pupils often read books with stark moral issues, including biographies such

as Anne Frank.

- Teachers ensure that pupils are taught all the elements of writing, including grammar, punctuation, spelling and composition, so that even some of the youngest children are able to write independently. Work in books shows that by the time children leave Reception, they are able to sequence sentences in chronological order to recount an event or experience. In Year 2, pupils use a range of exciting adjectives and descriptive phrases using complex connectives.
- Specialist teachers are outstanding practitioners. Pupils who play in the orchestra perform to the highest standards. They play and perform musically, with fluency, accuracy and expression. The youngest children perform 'Disney' songs and are precise in articulating words such as 'supercalifragilisticexpialidocious', and sing in harmony with amazing confidence. Regular concerts provide pupils with opportunities to take the lead, to cooperate and to perform to an audience, and celebrate together.

### The achievement of pupils

**is outstanding**

- All pupils make rapid progress from their starting points. The work in pupils' books and the school's information confirm attainment to be consistently well above the national expectations. It rises to high attainment in Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. As one pupil told inspectors, 'Each year the work gets more challenging.'
- There are no significant differences in achievement made by different groups of pupils, including those from different ethnic backgrounds or between boys or girls. All groups achieve as well as each other.
- The most able pupils achieve equally as well as all other pupils. Expectations are high for all pupils, including this group of learners. Pupils' workbooks reveal that these pupils achieve levels which are often two or three years ahead of what is expected nationally. All pupils who sit their 11+ examinations achieve well.
- Teachers assess and discuss pupil progress regularly. There is no room for any slippage. An additional teacher runs interventions and liaises regularly with class teachers to ensure that those pupils who need additional support have their full learning entitlement. The school works closely with outside agencies, such as the speech and language therapist who shares her expertise so that teaching assistants are able to work effectively with younger pupils to improve their language skills.
- Parents are justifiably proud of their child's achievements. They are also appreciate the 'extra mile' the school goes in making sure that their child has the very best provision available.
- Leaders have made sure that all the associated independent school standards are met, particularly in rigorously measuring pupil performance so that teachers pitch work at the right level of difficulty to secure rapid rates of progress for all pupils.

### The early years provision

**is outstanding**

- During their time in the early years, children make outstanding progress from their different starting points. Most children have skills typical for their age when they enter the pre-school nursery. By the time they leave the early years foundation stage, a large proportion of children exceed the early learning goals. Many are attaining levels Year 1 pupils are expected to achieve nationally. This is particularly so in reading, writing and mathematics. Children are therefore exceptionally well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- Likewise, the small pre-nursery setting for the youngest children prepares them well for their next stage of education. Those children who attend full time make rapid progress, especially in their communication and personal development.
- The parent and teacher association has raised significant funding for the outdoor provision, including resources to enhance a covered outdoor area, such as new bicycles and scooters. Nonetheless, the two outdoor areas do not support children's learning as well as in the classrooms. There are not enough words or pictures to support and stimulate children's learning. Activities do not always have identified skills to develop and extend children's learning.
- Routines are quickly established, as are positive and supportive relationships. Adults are skilled in nurturing every child so that they become resilient and self-assured learners. Children feel safe and are confident to try out new things for themselves.
- Progress accelerates in Reception because children have been well prepared in nursery to meet the very high expectations of work and behaviour. Children work diligently and with sustained concentration. As a result, they achieve exceptionally well, for example writing short stories with the correct punctuation, with

more able children using speech marks.

- Adults plan work that meets the needs of all abilities, based on accurate assessments. Many activities develop a range of skills, both in an adult-focused session or independently. In the Reception ('transition') 'café', children write menus with prices for each item. They politely ask each other what they would like to order and write these down carefully. They take turns in being a customer or a waiter. This activity provides children with a real-life context to use numbers and to write for a purpose, to cooperate and take turns, as well as to communicate effectively.
- The leadership and management of the early years are outstanding. Staff work well as a team and use all information to identify strengths, areas for improvement and to plan for further improvement. Children's progress is tracked so that every child achieves what they are capable of.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook).



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	102357
<b>Inspection number</b>	443495
<b>DfE registration number</b>	311/6054

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary School
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	178
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	4
<b>Proprietor</b>	St Mary's Hare Park Trust
<b>Headteacher</b>	K Karwacinski
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	September 2008
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£2,405–£2,525
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 761220
<b>Email address</b>	harepark@btconnect.com

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