

Inspection of a good school: St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School

Hastings Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex TN40 2ND

Inspection dates:

24–25 September 2019

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very well cared for at this school. They feel safe and happy. Teachers and staff know each pupil by name. Leaders welcome pupils with a handshake and a 'good morning' every day. Pupils know that the adults listen to them and help them if they need anything. Parents agree. Pupils are always expected to do the best they can in lessons and other school activities. Pupils often take on extra challenges to show they understand fully the topics they study. Behaviour in lessons is very good and pupils play together happily. Year 6 pupil leaders organise fun activities for all children to enjoy at playtimes and lunchtimes. Pupils say bullying is dealt with quickly on the rare occasions it occurs. Pupils feel very involved in school life, often singing together proudly as a whole school.

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

Pupils learn about a wide range of interesting subjects. They take part in many different activities that support their learning in class. For example, many pupils learn to play and perform in rock bands with pupils from other year groups.

Teachers plan mathematics learning carefully. In the early years, children learn to recognise numbers promptly. This is because there are a wide range of resources that support children well. Consequently, children begin to tackle mathematical problems with enthusiasm. In older year groups, pupils attempt more challenging problem-solving to further their learning. Pupils are supported to remember what they learn in mathematics well, including through games involving calculations.

Pupils enjoy reading; it is a favourite part of school for many. Teachers teach interesting topics around well-chosen texts that encourage pupils to read more. Children start to learn the sounds they need to read and communicate well as soon as they start in the early years. Well-planned learning captivates pupils' interest in reading right from the word go.

More pupils now know the sounds they should by the end of key stage 1 than in previous

years. Leaders need to ensure that even more pupils read confidently before they start in key stage 2.

Pupils learn about other parts of the world well, for example through a partnership with a school in Sierra Leone. Pupils learn first-hand about respect for others. In each class pupils create a class charter together, that they then follow. They learn about the environment and healthy lifestyles in activities such as gardening club and dodgeball.

Pupils are kind and considerate of each other. They like to help other people by taking part in many charity events, such as fun runs and cake bakes. Adults are well-trained to talk to pupils about bullying or other concerns and provide good support to any pupils who need help. Pupils behave well in school because they enjoy learning here. Learning is very rarely affected by low-level disruption.

Leaders use the funding they receive to assist disadvantaged pupils well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have appropriate help in place to enable them to learn well.

Leaders have created a culture where staff feel valued. Governors, leaders and staff work together closely for the benefit of every child.

Parents are very supportive of the staff in this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that there is a culture where any concern about a pupil's welfare and safety is reported and addressed properly. Staff know any concerns will be dealt with promptly by the appropriate leaders. As such, vulnerable pupils and their families are well supported.

Governors fulfil their safeguarding duties as they should. For example, governors make regular visits to check that the school's safeguarding procedures are maintained correctly.

Leaders make the necessary checks before employing staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders recognised that some pupils were not remembering all the sounds needed for pupils to read and communicate well by the end of key stage 1. Leaders have put in place strategies to support these children to learn sounds better. Now more children know the sounds they need to move to the next stage of education, compared to recent years. Leaders need to ensure that this work continues, so even more pupils have the expected knowledge of sounds and use them well to read by the end of key

stage 1.

- In some subjects, such as history, the plans used by teachers to help pupils learn things in an appropriate order need improving. Leaders have taken the right actions to do this.

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 second section 8 inspection since we judged St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School to be good on 21–22 September 2010.

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 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	114565
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10111263
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Nigel Feast
Headteacher (Interim)	Mrs Siobhan Andrews
Website	www.stmarymags.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 January 2016

Information about this school

- The interim Headteacher and deputy headteacher (seconded from another local primary school) have been in post since September 2018.
- The school is a one-form entry primary school. The school has the last year of a one-form extra entry, as guided by the local authority, in Year 6.
- The school's last inspection under section 48 of the education act 2005 was graded outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with senior leaders, curriculum leaders, subject teachers and pupils.
- The inspector reviewed the school website, publicly available pupil performance information, and other applicable school documentation.
- The inspector reviewed safeguarding procedures in place at the school, including the single central record and child protection and safeguarding policies. He met with the designated leader of safeguarding.
- Seventy-six responses to Ofsted's Parent View and 14 staff survey responses were considered as part of the inspection. The inspector met with parents at the start of the

school day on one day of the inspection.

- The inspector met with a group of teaching and non-teaching staff.
- The inspector held telephone conversations with a local authority representative and with a diocesan representative.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and lunchtime.
- Reading, mathematics and history were considered as part of the inspection.

Inspection team

Dylan Davies, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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