

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Ann's Hill Road, Gosport, Hampshire PO12 3NB

Inspection dates: 3–4 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

For too long, pupils have not done as well as they can at this school. Despite trying hard for their teachers, many pupils have left the school underachieving. Frequent changes in leaders have left teachers floundering and without direction.

Things have changed very recently. The new permanent headteacher has come in to the school with a new vision of 'community, pride and joy'. This is like a breath of fresh air. She has galvanised leaders and the staff team to have much greater ambitions about what pupils can achieve. However, everyone associated with the school knows that there is lots of work to do to help pupils to be successful in all aspects of school life.

Behaviour is improving in the school but it is not yet as positive as pupils want it to be. They know that some of their peers struggle to behave well and can sometimes be unkind. Pupils understand what bullying is, say it is not common and know that leaders will not tolerate it.

Pupils deserve to have a much wider range of opportunities to develop their skills and interests, including through clubs. They need a richer range of experiences that help to prepare them for the next stages in their education.

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

This school has required improvement for too long. This is because the governing body found it difficult to find and appoint permanent leaders. The local authority helped the school find interim leaders who did their best. However, they were unable to make the improvements required to teaching and to pupils' achievement.

The governors finally appointed the current headteacher, who has made an impressive start. She knows exactly what needs to improve and has written detailed plans to achieve this. She has empowered other leaders to support her and gained the trust of the staff, pupils, parents and carers.

In the past, the focus on English and mathematics, in an attempt to raise standards, meant that other subjects were not taught to some pupils. Leaders have checked that plans now cover all subjects required by the national curriculum. Most subjects are now taught more regularly. However, some subjects, such as computing, are not currently covered in full. Despite this, pupils are developing a strong knowledge of some aspects of the subject, such as online safety. Leaders are now thinking about how knowledge and skills progress and develop in each subject as pupils get older. They are making sure that pupils no longer repeat topics year after year, as they have done sometimes in the past.

Leaders have agreed with staff how to organise teaching at St Mary's. Some teachers have excellent subject knowledge, especially in areas that interest them. Where this is the case, pupils are fully engaged in lessons. However, pupils are not

always completely attentive in class. Teachers and support staff need further training in teaching different subjects. They need guidance to vary tasks to meet pupils' needs, especially in mixed-age classes.

Staff, pupils and parents confirm that behaviour has improved since September. Leaders' higher expectations are benefiting everyone and mean that learning is not disrupted. A few pupils are not able to live up to these higher expectations and have alternative plans. Leaders have also audited how pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified. They know staff need further training to support these pupils well.

Children make a good start to their education in the Reception class. They engage in purposeful activity and follow their interests in all areas of learning. Children play and learn well together inside and outside. Adults help them to develop their language and encourage them to write for a purpose. There are positive links between school and home that support children's learning.

The Reception class teaches phonics in a different way to the rest of the school. Leaders recognise that staff need further training in the teaching of phonics. They have also ordered reading books that match pupils' phonics knowledge. Leaders know a consistent approach across the school will help pupils quickly become fluent readers.

Pupils love to come together and sing in the school. There is a developing sense of community that the headteacher wishes to nurture and grow. She knows that pupils need a much wider range of experiences to help prepare them well for the future. At the moment, there are few clubs or activities to join in with. Plans to develop the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum are timely. The headteacher has a steely determination to improve the education pupils at St Mary's receive. She is resolute that she will lead a team that prepares pupils well for life in a diverse society.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

New leaders have ensured that staff have read and understood the latest guidance about their duties to keep pupils safe. Staff know what is expected of them, and records show that appropriate action is taken to protect vulnerable pupils. Governors regularly check safeguarding procedures.

Leaders have also forged positive links with other professionals in social care and the police service so that they can work together to keep pupils safe. As they develop the PSHE curriculum, leaders are considering different ways that they can teach pupils to stay safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In recent years, pupils have been underachieving in key stage 2. This means that not all pupils have been well prepared for secondary school. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are trained to help pupils make progress developing their knowledge and skills in all subjects to help them catch up.
- Leaders know that the curriculum needs further development. Some subjects are not taught frequently or well enough. This means pupils are not developing the subject-specific skills, knowledge and vocabulary they need. Leaders must complete their work to plan a curriculum that is sufficiently ambitious to help all pupils, including those with SEND, learn more and remember more in all subjects.
- Leaders have identified that the teaching of phonics is not consistent across the school. This means that children get off to a slow start in Reception and pupils do not catch up if they fall behind. Leaders need to implement planned training quickly and ensure that all staff have the expertise and resources needed to help all pupils read fluently.
- The planned programme for PSHE is not fully in place. Pupils have limited opportunities for wider personal development. This means that they lack a strong social and cultural awareness. Leaders need to implement their planned curriculum, including opportunities for pupils to learn about celebrating difference and provide a wider range of clubs and trips.

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're 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

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| Unique reference number | 116394 |
| Local authority | Hampshire |
| Inspection number | 10111115 |
| 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 | 220 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Carmen Tweed |
| Headteacher | Lauren O'Connor |
| Website | www.stmarysgosport.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 4–5 July 2017 |

Information about this school

- The new headteacher has been in post since June 2019 and was joined by the new deputy headteacher in September 2019. They are the first substantive leaders the school has had for over four years. In recent years, there has been a succession of different interim leadership arrangements.
- The number of pupils on roll is falling. The school now admits 30 pupils in each year group. However, older year groups still have larger numbers, which means that all key stage 2 classes are mixed-age.
- The last section 48 inspection of this Catholic school took place in June 2019. The school was graded inadequate.
- The school began to operate a breakfast club during the week of the inspection.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher throughout the inspection. We met four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- We met with two representatives of Hampshire local authority and a

representative of the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth.

- We did deep dives in reading, writing, mathematics, science, history and physical education. Each deep dive involved talking to subject leaders, visiting lessons (with senior and/or subject leaders), talking to pupils about their learning, looking in detail at pupils' work and talking to teachers. An inspector heard some pupils read as part of the reading deep dive.
- To inspect safeguarding, we checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. We also talked to a range of staff and pupils informally.
- We considered the 18 responses to the pupil survey and the 19 responses to the confidential staff survey. We talked to parents before school and took account of the 24 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire.

Inspection team

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