

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

Arden Road, Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire B95 5LT

Inspection dates:

14 January 2020

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school, where everyone gets on well with each other. The school's Christian values are understood and modelled by pupils and staff. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. In lessons, they work hard to produce their best work. At social times, pupils play well together. They are polite and welcoming to visitors.

Pupils are well cared for at this small school, where everyone feels part of an extended family. Pupils are safe here. Bullying is rare, and pupils are confident that if it does happen an adult will sort it out quickly.

Pupils are very proud of their responsibilities. For example, pupils organise charity events to raise money for children less fortunate than themselves. Eco-committee members lead assemblies about how to look after the environment, and sports leaders help younger pupils to play games at lunchtime. Pupils make a positive difference to the lives of others. The head boy and girl provide valuable support to leaders by helping at school events and showing visitors around.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Equal importance is given to pupils' academic, personal and social development. Pupils are well prepared for the move to secondary school.

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

Children get off to a great start in Reception. The curriculum is broad and well organised. Activities build on what children already know and can do. Topics are linked to children's interests. Adults have good subject knowledge about the different areas of learning. They ensure that children develop the reading, writing and mathematical skills they need to be ready for Year 1. Relationships between adults and children and among children are positive. This means that children quickly settle when they start school, where they are safe and happy.

Leaders have redesigned the curriculum. They have made sure that subject plans are ambitious and provide opportunities for pupils to know and remember more as they move through each key stage. Some of these plans are well established and learning is well sequenced to enable pupils to build on what they already know. In other subjects, including history, lessons are not sequenced as well as they could be. New subject leaders are not sufficiently supported so that they can continue to develop these plans and check how well they are being implemented. Leaders have plans to address this.

Leaders ensure that reading is a priority. All staff promote reading and place it at the heart of the curriculum. Staff are well trained and have secure subject knowledge. Over the last four years, every child has achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

Pupils read regularly and confidently discuss their favourite books and authors. A high proportion achieve well at the end of each key stage. Occasionally, tasks are not matched well enough to the needs of the most able pupils. This means that this group of pupils does not make as much progress as it could.

The mathematics curriculum is well organised and includes a broad range of topics. Pupils enjoy mathematics and are confident learners. Pupils build a secure knowledge of calculation strategies. Most pupils make good progress in this subject. At the moment, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge when solving problems or in other subjects across the curriculum. This means they do not deepen their understanding as well as they could.

Staff have high expectations of what pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can achieve. Tasks are well matched to individual pupils' needs. As a result, this group of pupils makes good progress in a wide range of subjects.

Provision for pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect for different religions and cultures. They are adamant that anyone is welcome at their school regardless of skin colour, faith or disability. Staff place great importance on pupils' mental health and well-being. Pupils are resilient and are not frightened to try something new.

Directors of the multi-academy company (MAC) provide appropriate support and challenge. For example, a director sits on the newly formed local governing board and ensures that governors are effective in their roles. The new governors understand the school's strengths and what is being done to address any weaknesses.

Staff enjoy working at the school and say that leaders are considerate of their workload. Parents are highly supportive of the school and the experiences that their children have.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff are trained to spot any signs that there may be a concern about a child's welfare. Staff are vigilant and report any concerns no matter how small. Leaders have a good understanding of the local community and the types of safeguarding issues that pupils may face. Leaders make the right checks on people before they start work at the school.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through a well-sequenced curriculum. They have a particularly good understanding of how to use the internet safely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have provided training for staff so that they have good subject knowledge in the teaching of reading. Sometimes, tasks planned for the pupils in key stage 2 are not well matched to the needs of the most able. Leaders should ensure that teachers provide sufficiently challenging tasks for the most able pupils so that they can achieve as well as possible.
- The mathematics curriculum is well planned and provides opportunities for pupils to build on previous learning. Leaders should ensure that pupils have more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge when solving problems in mathematics and in a variety of other subjects. This is to enable pupils to further deepen their understanding of mathematics.
- Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum so that pupils will acquire subject specific knowledge across all subjects. In some subjects, like history, this work is in the early stages. Leaders should ensure that new subject leaders have the skills to accurately evaluate how well their subject is being implemented.

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 11–12 December 2012.

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	143631
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10122519
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	John Burke
Headteacher	Jane McNally
Website	www.stmaryshenley.warwickshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Holy Family MAC. The MAC consists of five primary schools and one secondary school.
- The school became an academy in April 2017, replacing the predecessor school, also known as St Mary's Catholic Primary School.
- The headteacher's role is being covered by a headteacher from another school within the MAC. The school's substantive headteacher is currently on maternity leave.
- The school's last section 48 inspection took place in February 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND. The lead inspector met with a representative of the Holy Family MAC. The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the archdiocese of Birmingham on the telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. This involved speaking to curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils, evaluating pupils' books, and visits to lessons.

- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing board, including the chair and the vice-chair. Inspectors also discussed staff workload with governors and senior leaders.
- Inspectors checked safeguarding arrangements at the school. They looked at the record of checks made on staff employed by the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader and looked at examples of the school's record-keeping. Inspectors spoke to pupils, staff and governors about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation provided by the school. They looked at the school's website, policies and curriculum documents. Safeguarding information, SEND records and published information about pupils' performance were evaluated.
- Inspectors considered 24 responses to Parent View and 13 free-text responses. An inspector spoke to parents informally on the playground.
- Inspectors considered 6 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupils' questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jo Evans, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Collette Higgins

Ofsted Inspector

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