

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

Herringthorpe Valley Road, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S65 2NU

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 October 2021

Outcome

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

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Mary's is a kind and nurturing school. The Catholic faith is important in the daily life of everyone in school. Adults know the pupils and the wider school community well. There is a caring atmosphere that permeates the school. Pupils' behaviour is purposeful and respectful. Pupils move calmly throughout different activities within the school day.

Pupils are proud of their school. They feel welcome and safe here. They are able to talk through how adults support them. They know where to go for help if they feel worried or concerned. Pupils were able to give examples of how they stay safe online, and offline, within their wider community.

One pupil said, 'In every single lesson, the teachers manage to squeeze a little bit of fun in so you can enjoy it when you are learning.' Despite pupils enjoying their learning, in many subjects the curriculum plans contain too little detail. As a result, pupils cannot always remember what they have been learning and do not reach high end points. Leaders are keen to broaden pupils' horizons through the development of their wider curriculum. It is also important to them that pupils continue to enjoy their learning as they strive for more ambitious outcomes.

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

Since the arrival of the new headteacher, the strengthening of leadership in the school has been a priority. Together with the governing body, the headteacher has developed a senior leadership team that has the capacity to make the changes this school needs. This new leadership team acknowledges the need for higher expectations of what pupils are able to achieve. The members of the team are working with all staff to raise their ambition for pupils across the curriculum.

Leaders understand the importance of a consistent approach to teaching early reading. The phonics and reading leaders have overseen training and support. This means that staff in the early years and key stage 1 know how to teach early reading consistently. This is supporting the delivery of the phonics programme to younger pupils. This approach is not embedded into key stage 2, so pupils who are still struggling to learn to read are not supported well enough.

In mathematics, there is a carefully sequenced curriculum in place. This has supported leaders in quickly addressing mathematical misconceptions due to missed learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers make careful adaptations to the mathematics curriculum to ensure that pupils catch up on any missed learning. This is supporting pupils to be able to use what they know to think more deeply, reason mathematically and solve problems.

However, this is not the case in all subjects. Curriculum planning does not show how pupils will build their knowledge and skills from Reception to Year 6. Some subject leaders are unable to explain how units of learning link together. Prior knowledge is not regularly recapped in order to support pupils in building on this with each new unit of learning. Leaders have planned training with subject leaders in order to develop curriculum planning across all subjects.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), who is new to the role this year, has developed procedures that are effective in supporting pupils. In all lessons visited, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities were able to access the curriculum alongside their classmates. The SENCo has high expectations for pupils. She understands the need to work with subject leaders to build a curriculum that is adaptable for all pupils.

The relationships and sexual health education curriculum supports pupils in knowing how to be safe and healthy in school, at home and within their local environment. The learning mentor monitors this and checks in regularly with pupils and staff. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of personal attributes, including kindness, integrity, generosity and honesty. Pupils are prepared socially, emotionally and culturally to become caring adults who make a meaningful contribution to society.

In discussion with the headteacher, we agreed that curriculum development, including the continued professional development of subject leaders, may usefully serve as an area of focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff have received up-to-date safeguarding training. They know the signs to look for which might mean that a child is at risk of harm. Leaders know families and pupils well and respond quickly to concerns raised by staff. They work with the local authority and other agencies to ensure that pupils get the help they need. Weekly staff briefings mean

that all adults have an up-to-date understanding of their local context. Effective systems are in place to ensure a robust culture of safeguarding throughout the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The wider curriculum is in the early stages of development in many subjects, and curriculum plans contain too little detail. This prevents pupils from reaching ambitious end points. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum clearly sets out the precise detail of what pupils need to know and in what order. This will support pupils to know more, remember more and be able to do more.
- COVID-19 restrictions have limited the opportunity for subject leaders in this school to monitor the delivery of the curriculum in their subject area. As a result, they do not have a precise enough picture of what learning looks like in the wider curriculum. Subject leaders should support staff to deliver learning that is carefully sequenced and well planned so that all pupils receive an education that is at least good.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Mary's Catholic Primary School, to be good in July 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 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.

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	139880
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10199629
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Colin Taylor
Headteacher	Mrs Anna Osborne
Website	www.stmarysherringthorpe.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 February 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a single academy school which is due to become part of the Diocesan multi-academy trust in March 2022.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID 19 pandemic began. The impact of the pandemic was discussed with school's leaders and has been taken into account in the evaluation.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the SENCo, curriculum leaders and a range of staff and pupils. She spoke with members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- The lead inspector looked closely at the quality of education in early reading, mathematics and history. This involved speaking with leaders, pupils and staff, visiting lessons, listening to pupils read and reviewing samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in the school, the lead inspector spoke to many members of staff and pupils. The inspector met with the

designated safeguarding leaders to discuss the school's policies and procedures. During these meetings, records were scrutinised, including those relating to the safer recruitment of staff. Case files were sampled to explore how the school identifies and supports pupils at risk of harm. She also spoke with pupils and staff to evaluate the school's safeguarding culture.

- The views of staff were considered from conversations and 16 responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. The 85 responses to Ofsted's Parent View, including written responses, were taken into account.

Inspection team

Zoe Lightfoot, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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