

Inspection of a good school: St Mary's Primary School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy

Pack Horse Lane, High Green, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S35 3HY

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 October 2021

Outcome

St Mary's Primary School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The pupils at St Mary's Primary School have many positive things to say about their school. These include the different subjects they enjoy, their friends and, most commonly, their teachers. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Pupils feel safe in school and are sure that if they have any problems, they will be able to tell staff about them. Older pupils speak very maturely about respect. Leaders have high expectations of pupils. The curriculum is increasingly ambitious. Pupils rise to meet these expectations.

Pupils behave well. They are taught to regulate their behaviour and understand why some pupils might not choose to do the right thing. They are clear that bullying is a rare event but when it does happen, they say that staff deal with it well.

Parents are very positive about the school. Almost all of those who completed the survey for this inspection would recommend the school. One parent wrote how their children 'skip into school every day excited to learn, see their friends and their teachers'. The parents and grandparents with whom the inspector met were just as positive.

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

All teachers are ambitious for the pupils. They have developed a curriculum that helps pupils both to build their knowledge step by step and that sparks their interest. Teachers have great expertise in the teaching of reading. In reception, most children are developing their phonic knowledge well. Pupils across the school enjoy listening to books every day and are actively involved in the choice of these books. There is a good range of books for pupils to read at home. Leaders are always looking for new ways to involve parents to encourage a love of reading.

After all pupils returned to school following the period of COVID-19 restrictions, leaders noted that there were gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge. Leaders decided to

completely change the curriculum. This is being very effectively implemented currently, although this is a work in progress. Pupils are now encouraged to fully explain what they are doing so that they understand it with depth. Older pupils were confident in their knowledge of their times tables.

Leaders have been developing curriculum plans in subjects other than English and mathematics. They have ensured that key knowledge is identified and that it is covered in a logical order by pupils. Teachers return to key information to try to make sure that pupils retain this knowledge. Pupils are given some opportunities to deepen their knowledge in some subjects.

For example, pupils enjoy the variety of topics that they do in their history lessons. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils were able to tell the inspector about Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale, for example. Teachers make sure that there are clear links to what pupils already know. However, older pupils were not always able to recall previous learning or use their knowledge to explain why things might have happened.

Leaders put a great deal of emphasis on pupils' personal development. The headteacher talked with real passion about all that the school offers. There is real frustration about the impact of the pandemic on this aspect of the school's work. However, leaders found creative solutions during lockdown, such as an online choir. Leaders have thought carefully about the experiences that pupils have missed and have acted to rectify this. For example, swimming has been moved to Year 5, so that this year group does not lose out on this opportunity. The pupils spoke enthusiastically about the clubs that the school provided before the pandemic. They value the ones that have restarted. Governors do not monitor this aspect of the schools' work. This was one of a number of areas where weaknesses were noted in their work. Pupils also spoke about the good behaviour in the school.

The headteacher provides very effective leadership. Staff feel that they have been fully involved in the changes made to the curriculum and that their workload is well considered. Staff morale is high, with all the staff who completed the survey saying they are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. All the correct employment checks are made. Leaders are tireless in their efforts to get support for pupils and their families. This work is underpinned by the strong Christian ethos of the school. Staff receive regular training and understand their responsibilities. There is a full programme in place to teach pupils how to remain safe, including any risks they may face online. Governors oversee this aspect of the school's work well.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have noted that some pupils have not remembered key mathematical concepts. They have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders have remodelled the mathematics curriculum this term. Leaders should continue the development of the mathematics curriculum and ensure that any gaps in pupils' knowledge are plugged and that they remember what they are taught.
- Not enough emphasis is placed on ensuring that pupils learn the intended curriculum. Some pupils do not retain key knowledge in different subjects. Leaders need to ensure that pupils retain key knowledge and are offered sufficient opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of concepts such as cause in history.
- Governors discharge their safeguarding responsibility well. However, they do not monitor all aspects of provision equally effectively. Governors need to ensure that they hold school leaders to account for all relevant aspects of their work.

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 High Green, to be good in May 2011.

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	140440
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10200138
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	190
Appropriate authority	Board of Trustees
Chair	Edward Russell
Headteacher	Alexandra Healy
Website	www.st-marysgreen.sheffield.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	4 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been no relevant changes since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders and members of staff. He met with the chair of governors and one additional governor. The inspector met with a representative from the diocese and spoke on the telephone to a representative of the local authority. He took account of ten responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at breaktime and at lunchtime. He gathered pupils' views from both formal and informal discussions.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, improvement plan and safeguarding information.

- The inspector met parents and grandparents. He took account of 40 responses to Ofsted's parents' questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector looked in depth at the following subjects: reading, mathematics and history. In doing this, he visited all classes in the school and reviewed pupils' work. The inspector spoke to pupils about their work and listened to them read. He also met with teachers.

Inspection team

Andrew Cummings, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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