

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Russell Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 1QL

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Mary's is a very positive, nurturing place built on mutual respect. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Parents and carers confirm this. A comment, typical of the many received, sums it up well: 'A very happy, secure setting in which my daughter is really thriving'.

The mission statement, 'To be the best that we can be', is embodied by staff. Pupils thrive because the curriculum is ambitious for all. Staff ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have the same opportunities as their peers. As a result, all pupils achieve well.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. On the rare occasion that there is any off-task behaviour, staff deal with it swiftly and effectively. Pupils concentrate well in lessons. They said that the golden rule of 'Kind words – great choices' supports them to make the right decisions.

Everyone agrees that there is hardly ever any bullying. Pupils explained very clearly what bullying is. They said it is extremely rare and, if it were to happen, staff would sort it out immediately and it would stop.

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

The curriculum in most subjects is well designed and sequenced to help pupils build knowledge and skills over time. For example, in physical education (PE), pupils in Year 6 use the ball skills they have developed in previous years when learning to play netball. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They find fun ways to help pupils practise skills and recall what they have learned before. For example, in mathematics, teachers set pupils simple quizzes. This regular revisiting of subject content supports the learning of pupils with SEND particularly well. Staff know pupils' needs well and use suitable strategies to support those with SEND.

In a few subjects, the curriculum is not so well developed. Staff have not broken down pupils' learning into manageable steps. Pupils do not always have a secure understanding of what they have learned previously. This makes it difficult on occasion for pupils to tackle more complex work.

Staff teach phonics sequentially, starting in Reception. Teachers are very clear on this sequence. This secure start ensures that most pupils start Year 1 with the reading skills they need to access the full curriculum. Leaders have a range of support for those pupils who need more help in early reading. Occasionally, books for those pupils are not matched to the sounds they know. This affects their ability to read independently.

Pupils' excellent behaviour helps lessons run smoothly. They take pride in their work. Pupils trust and respect each other. This means that they work well together.

Inspectors saw pupils working on problems together in mathematics, for example. The discussions they had helped them find effective ways to calculate perimeter.

Leaders ensure that pupils get to experience the best that London has to offer. Learning across the curriculum is enhanced by trips to relevant places of interest. For example, a visit to the Imperial War Museum enriched pupils' learning in history. Pupils have the chance to take part in school performances, for example in drama and music. Many pupils said this was what they love best about the school. They were very excited about the nativity plays taking place at the time of the inspection.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to become active citizens in the school community, including becoming house captains, school council members or chaplains. In these roles, pupils take the opportunity to bring about change. They raise money, introduce new initiatives and help to improve their school.

The school's PE curriculum and selection of sports clubs are popular with pupils. They enjoy taking part in sport and can say how it keeps them healthy. Pupils also know how to make healthy food choices. This is modelled to them at lunch, during break and in after-school clubs. Pupils also talk about meditation as a way to be mentally healthy. Leaders have a strong focus on well-being. They provide therapy and nurture groups for any pupils experiencing anxiety or other mental health issues. Parents are complimentary about the pastoral care their children receive.

Staff are positive about the professional development leaders provide. They reported that leaders are supportive and approachable. Staff said that leaders take note of their well-being. For example, they spoke of yoga and meditation and how these initiatives help them cope with their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The systems for reporting concerns are clear. Staff receive regular training. Consequently, they are confident about what they should report and how to do so. Leaders work closely with other agencies to ensure that pupils' and families' needs are met.

Pupils feel safe at school. They know that adults will look after them. They appreciate it when adults remind them how to stay safe, including online. For example, through their computing lessons, pupils learn how to safeguard their personal information when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in most subjects is well designed and sequenced to help pupils learn more over time. However, planning in a few subjects is not fully broken down into steps that support teachers to plan effectively. Pupils do not always have a secure understanding of previous learning. Leaders need to ensure that all subjects are carefully planned and sequenced and that learning is broken down into manageable steps. This will help to ensure that pupils build sufficient knowledge and skills in all subjects to tackle more challenging work.
- On occasion, some weaker readers are given books that contain sounds with which they are not confident. This means that they are not able to practise reading with fluency. Leaders must ensure that books are carefully matched to sounds that pupils know. This is especially the case for weaker readers moving into key stage 2.

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	102670
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10204502
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	457
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Simon Peat
Headteacher	David McCabe
Website	www.st-marys.merton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 November 2007

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has grown to have two forms of entry.
- The headteacher took over this role in September 2021, having joined the school in 2019 as a deputy headteacher.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- This school is designated as having a religious character. The last section 48 inspection was in July 2018. The next section 48 inspection is due in 2023.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art, history, early reading, PE and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked

at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and looked at some samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about geography, science and early years.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, as well as a representative of the local authority. She also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during playtime and in the lunch hall. They also met pupils to talk about geography and look at the work in their books.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of information about the school. This included information about safeguarding, such as the records of checks made on staff, logs of behaviour incidents, attendance figures, the school's website and leaders' improvement plans.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff and took account of the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the end of the school day and took account of the 148 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey, as well as the 106 free-text comments.

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Franklin	Ofsted Inspector
Jayne Jardine	Ofsted Inspector

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