

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Rowden Hill, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 2AH

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are confident and happy. They are polite and considerate to one another. Pupils treat their friends and adults with respect. They listen carefully to each other when working and playing together. Pupils know the difference between bullying and falling out. They say that bullying does not happen. Pupils are well behaved.

Leaders plan opportunities for pupils' personal development carefully. This is rooted in the vision, values and Catholic faith of the school. Pupils appreciate the supportive and caring school community. They know and value diversity and difference. This prepares the pupils well for life in modern Britain. One parent, typical of many, said that staff 'foster kindness and thoughtfulness to others'.

Pupils are proud of their roles of responsibility, such as being school council members or part of the chaplaincy group. Enrichment activities, including outdoor learning sessions and residential visits, help pupils develop skills for life. These purposeful activities improve pupils' understanding of fair play and teamwork.

Nonetheless, pupils have significant gaps in their wider subject knowledge. In mathematics, they do not have regular opportunities to apply their knowledge to solving problems and reasoning questions. This limits the development of their mathematical skills, vocabulary and knowledge.

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

Leaders have rightly made learning to read a priority. Teachers' and teaching assistants' phonics knowledge is secure. They check that pupils say the letters and sounds correctly. They quickly spot pupils who need extra help. Useful catch-up sessions are provided for these pupils. Reading books match pupils' phonic knowledge appropriately. Pupils build their phonics knowledge, reading speed and accuracy well.

The 'Wiltshire Year of Reading' award recognises the staff's commitment to nurturing pupils' love of reading. Pupils are keen to talk about the books they read. They enjoy sharing books as reading buddies. Staff promote reading successfully across the school.

Leaders have crafted clearly sequenced English, mathematics and science curriculums. Nevertheless, teachers do not use the mathematics curriculum to develop pupils' mathematical knowledge sufficiently well. Pupils gain a strong foundation in their number knowledge. Teachers check that pupils understand this important fundamental knowledge accurately. However, pupils do not apply this knowledge across a range of written problems and reasoning questions regularly. This also limits the development of their mathematical vocabulary.

The art and history curriculums set out the essential knowledge, skills and vocabulary leaders want pupils to learn and remember. This is a new development. Staff absence due to COVID-19 during the autumn and spring terms, however, slowed the progress of curriculum development in other subjects. In these, the essential knowledge pupils must know and remember is not clearly identified. Likewise, in the early years, the curriculum does not set out the intended learning clearly.

Where curriculums are not complete, teachers cannot check if there are gaps in pupils' knowledge. They cannot plan to fill these gaps quickly. Pupils are not able to make connections or secure new knowledge. They can often recall the lesson activity, but not the purpose of the enquiry. For example, Year 6 pupils can recall using Newton meters in design and technology (DT), but not why.

Following the identification of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), staff work with external agencies to support these pupils well. Leaders have plans in place to help strengthen the individual target-setting process with greater input from parents and carers.

Staff care for pupils' well-being. They teach pupils how to be physically and mentally healthy. Whole-school worship and discussions in lessons help pupils to understand and appreciate different cultures, faiths and societies successfully. Pupils know the school values. They recognise how these values help them learn right and wrong. This starts in the early years where children are encouraged to make the right choices. This helps ensure that the school has a calm and orderly environment. There are clear routines and expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond appropriately.

Leaders help families to overcome any barriers preventing their children from attending school regularly. This work is effective. Pupils attend school regularly.

Governors understand how to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. They increasingly ask questions to challenge and hold school leaders to account. Their knowledge of the wider subject curriculum is growing.

Staff appreciate the support of school leaders and governors to manage their workload. They know leaders care for their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders complete appropriate checks before staff and volunteers begin working at the school. Staff and governors attend regular safeguarding training. They know and understand their roles and responsibilities. For example, governors regularly check that recruitment and training records are up to date.

Staff know how to record and report concerns for pupils' welfare. Leaders respond with appropriate actions in a timely manner, including engaging with external agencies.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. This includes when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some parts of the curriculum, including the early years, the key concepts leaders want pupils to know and remember are not identified. Consequently, pupils cannot make connections between important concepts and build their knowledge over time. Leaders must identify the key concepts pupils must know and remember across the curriculum.
- Pupils have gaps in their knowledge across some foundation subjects. This makes it difficult to secure their knowledge further. Leaders need to support teachers to use assessment information to identify gaps in pupils' essential knowledge and rectify these gaps swiftly.
- Pupils do not apply their mathematical knowledge to problem-solving and reasoning questions regularly. This means they cannot extend their mathematical knowledge and vocabulary appropriately. Teachers need to ensure that all pupils apply their mathematical knowledge, skills and vocabulary across all areas of the mathematics curriculum frequently.

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	126482
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10211749
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	151
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michael Millard
Headteacher	Paul Bacon
Website	www.st-marys-pri.wilts.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	10–11 July 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2019. The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2018.
- An interim executive board was responsible for school governance between November 2018 and November 2020, when the newly formed governing body was appointed.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff, pupils, governors, including the chair of governors, and representatives from Wiltshire local authority and the Diocese of Clifton.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a known adult.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and DT. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum 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 samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the designated safeguarding lead acts on concerns about pupils' safety and welfare. The inspectors spoke to pupils, staff and governors about safeguarding practices.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the responses to the surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Marie Thomas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sean Millar

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022