

# Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Glamis Street, Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO21 1DJ

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Inspection dates: 27 and 28 September 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are safe and happy in their caring school community. They strive to be like 'saints' and treat each other with kindness. Pupils were proud to help write the school's mission statement for everyone to 'journey and grow together'. Older pupils are 'buddies' with younger pupils to help them at lunchtime, showing this ethos in action every day.

Pupils meet the high expectations set by leaders and staff. All pupils are included in opportunities. Leaders prioritise help for anyone who needs it. Bullying is never tolerated, and pupils learn how to be responsible citizens who show respect for others.

Pupils value democracy when they elect school councillors and house captains. Pupils understand healthy living and stay active at clubs such as netball, football and karate. They embrace chances to be 'future flyers' as they promote and lead sport across the school. Pupils enjoy sharing art activities at 'smash', the school's after-school club.

The spirituality garden is a special place for quiet meditation, regardless of faith. Pupils also appreciate time for reflection during 'rosary club' and 'spiritual week' experiences. Everyone was excited to be filmed for a forthcoming television programme featuring the school's archaeology project.

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

Pupils work hard and enjoy learning. The curriculum is designed to excite and interest them through a 'coastal, Catholic and international' approach. Pupils develop mathematics skills through well-planned lessons. They frequently practise number skills and explain their mathematical thinking. In computing, pupils apply a range of skills to collaborate and make film trailers using technology. In English, pupils practise reading, writing, and spelling inspired by their history studies. Pupils develop their scientific thinking and investigation skills by carrying out experiments such as finding, identifying and classifying invertebrates.

In most subjects, leaders have clearly mapped the skills pupils will develop through their learning. However, it is not always clear what knowledge is planned from early years through to the end of Year 6. As a result, pupils do not always make strong connections across their learning. Subject leaders and teachers should define the knowledge pupils should acquire each year to help them learn, understand and remember more. Some staff need further professional development to develop expertise across all subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Leaders use their expertise to identify needs and find the right help for pupils, often through providing training for staff. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well. Many

pupils speak different languages at home. Staff provide strong support to help all pupils learn English sounds and letters. Sometimes this involves staff helping families in their first language to understand how to support their children's reading.

Reading starts in early years using a clearly sequenced programme. Books are well matched to give children the daily practice they need. Catch-up sessions are particularly strong in Year 1, when pupils receive swift and effective help if they find reading difficult. As a result, pupils move through the school as fluent readers who love books.

Children are sociable and happy in early years. They engage positively with tasks to develop skills in mathematics and fine motor control. Character development starts early. Children treat each other with kindness and respect. Communication with families is strong. Parents appreciate workshops to help them support their children. However, key vocabulary that children need to learn is not planned across all areas of the early years curriculum. Assessment in the early years should also be sharper and more efficient.

Behaviour is good. Adults have high expectations. Playtimes are fun and safe, and pupils say that bullying does not happen. They want everyone to feel equal. Most pupils are enthusiastic about learning, but some pupils need reminders to stay focused. They are always polite and respectful to adults. Sometimes, individual pupils need help with managing their emotions. Leaders provide well-being support to help them to improve behaviour and access learning.

Pastoral care is prioritised. Families describe the school as caring, inclusive, and nurturing. Pupils are proud of roles such as school councillor and house captain. They value the democratic voting system. Leaders always address any problems between pupils which challenge the inclusive ethos of the school. The relationships and health education programme helps pupils to understand and celebrate differences.

Governors share the vision and values of leaders. They know and support the school well. They ask questions to explore pupil premium funding and curriculum development. Governors ensure that their duties for safeguarding are met. However, they should be more proactive to promote equality objectives.

Staff glow when describing their school. They appreciate how leaders support them with workload and well-being. The words of one parent summarised the views of many: 'The headteacher leads by example and creates a very nurturing environment'. Families are thankful for the high-quality care pupils receive every day at St Mary's Catholic Primary School.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a culture of vigilance across the school. Staff are well trained to identify concerns for pupils' welfare. Leaders are aware of local risks such as county lines. They work with agencies, including the police, to educate and protect pupils. Leaders know individual families well. They are diligent and work tirelessly to find help that is needed.

Records are well maintained and systems are robust. Leaders and governors always carry out detailed checks to ensure that recruitment procedures support the school's strong commitment to safeguard pupils.

Pupils understand healthy relationships and how to stay safe online.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have carefully considered skills for pupils to learn. However, component knowledge is not clearly planned in some subjects. Learning in early years does not always link strongly with what is taught in the rest of the school. As a result, pupils may not know and remember more over time. Leaders should identify the knowledge they want pupils to learn across the curriculum throughout all stages of learning.
- Subject leaders are ambitious in their areas of expertise, but teachers' subject knowledge is not consistently secure across all classes. In some subjects, pupils do not benefit from teachers having strong subject knowledge. Subject leaders and teachers require further professional development to help them grow and share their expertise further.
- Assessment and the identification of key vocabulary are not sharp in early years. Staff are spending time recording large amounts of evidence rather than supporting and teaching children. Leaders must refine assessment practice in line with the latest early years framework. Essential vocabulary that children need to know should be clearly planned across the seven areas of learning.

## **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.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	126037
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227651
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	305
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Tony Lucas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Edgington
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-marys-bognor.co.uk">www.st-marys-bognor.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with four governors, including the chair.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with representatives from West Sussex local authority and the Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector checked the single central record of recruitment checks, studied actions taken when referrals were escalated, and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, history, and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning, looked at pupils' work, discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, and spoke to teachers. The lead inspector heard a selection of pupils read.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and the additional free-text responses.
- Inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons.

### **Inspection team**

Scott Reece, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Shaughnessy

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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