

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Cheltenham Road East, Churchdown, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL3 1HU

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Mary's Catholic Primary School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, 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 of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are taught to care about themselves and each other. They show respect and kindness to their peers and to staff. Pupils play together well. Older pupils support younger pupils at playtimes by organising games. They help younger pupils learn how to take turns and celebrate each other's achievements.

Pupils say that bullying is rare. If they 'fall out' with their friends, staff listen and help them to develop their friendships. One parent's comment, typical of many, described the staff as being a 'supportive, kind and caring team'.

Pupils take part in a wide range of enrichment activities. They appreciate the opportunity to attend after-school clubs, such as dance and football. Pupils keep fit by completing the daily mile. Educational trips help them experience life outside of school. Pupils' talents, interests and citizenship skills are nurtured well. For example, the chaplaincy team organise fundraising events for charity. Pupils are proud to represent their school at sporting events.

Pupils are always keen to read with Alfie, the reading dog. They enjoy learning and attend school regularly. This positive attitude to school life begins in the early years.

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

Leaders have designed a clearly sequenced curriculum. They have focused on providing a broad and balanced curriculum that extends pupils' thinking beyond reading, writing and mathematics. This is a strength of the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from the same curriculum as their peers.

Subject leaders have identified 'big ideas' across all subject curriculums. Teachers use these to plan learning activities to help pupils build on prior knowledge successfully. For example, pupils recall French phrases and important people through history well. The curriculum's 'big ideas' are taught across all subject areas. However, this work is new. As a result, essential knowledge is not taught consistently well across some subject areas, including the early years. This means that, sometimes, pupils cannot make connections between important concepts.

Teachers regularly check pupils' knowledge and recall of prior learning. Where teachers use assessment information effectively, they quickly rectify misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge. This includes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. For example, in mathematics, practice sessions are used well to help pupils to secure their knowledge of mathematical concepts. This helps pupils build their knowledge over time successfully.

Leaders prioritise reading. This begins in Reception Year when children are introduced to the joy of books. There are many books in the classroom to interest children and match the learning theme. The youngest pupils read books that closely

match the phonics they learn. Staff's phonic knowledge is secure. They use this to check pupils' phonic knowledge and quickly spot those who need help. Pupils who need additional help have appropriate extra practice.

Teachers model reading skilfully and discuss a wide range of books regularly. Pupils borrow books from the school library frequently. Pupils enjoy reading to adults. This supports pupils to read with fluency and develops their comprehension skills well.

The learning environment across the school is calm and orderly. Some pupils need extra help to learn how to understand and manage their feelings. Staff are quick to spot who needs this additional support and to provide help. This leads to productive learning in class and enjoyable playtimes.

Staff support for pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils know how to keep their bodies and minds healthy. They are taught about the importance of respect and safe, positive relationships. Pupils are developing their knowledge of life in modern Britain. They have an appreciation of difference and diversity across Britain.

Leaders are committed to the school, its pupils and staff. They are mindful of individuals' well-being and ensure staff workload is manageable. Staff appreciate the support they receive from leaders.

Governors monitor school improvement effectively. They know and understand the impact of leaders' work. Governors hold leaders accountable for their roles and responsibilities. For example, they check the impact of leaders' actions to improve pupil attendance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure recruitment checks are completed before staff and volunteers begin working at the school. Staff and governors attend regular safeguarding training.

Staff report and record welfare and safety concerns. Leaders respond quickly to staff concerns with suitable actions. Leaders work with and challenge external practitioners to secure appropriate support for pupils.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Online safety messages are reinforced by visitors to the school, such as local police community support officers.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have identified the essential knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. However, teachers have not implemented this consistently across some foundation subject curriculums. This means pupils do not always remember important concepts so are unable to build on prior learning and make connections between concepts taught. Subject leaders need to support staff to teach effectively the essential knowledge pupils must know and remember across foundation subject curriculums.

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

Unique reference number	137031
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10228758
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Richard Wallace
Headteacher	Liam Jordan
Website	www.st-marys-churchdown.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy school in February 2012. When its predecessor school, St Mary's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Clifton.
- The headteacher was in post at the time of the last inspection.
- The school does not use alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the senior teachers, staff, pupils, governors, including the chair of the governing body, a representative from the diocese and a local authority representative.
- 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, modern foreign languages and history. 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 also observed pupils during breakfast club and breaktimes, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils and leaders about personal, social and health education and opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- 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.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. She also took into consideration the responses to the survey for staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Marie Thomas, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tom Brewer

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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