

# Inspection of a good school: St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Wolverhampton

Cannock Road, Fallings Park, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV10 8PG

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Inspection dates:

24 and 25 January 2023

## **Outcome**

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Wolverhampton continues to be a good school.

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

The school's values of 'believe, achieve, aspire' permeate throughout the school. Leaders' aspirations for pupils are without limits. This is a school that pupils and staff are rightly proud of. Parents, carers and pupils typically describe the staff as caring and the school community as welcoming.

All pupils are welcomed with open arms. Leaders ensure that each pupil's academic needs are fully considered and met. Consequently, pupils achieve well. Pupils demonstrate a great deal of care for each other, particularly those who are new to school or new to the country.

Pupils say that they feel safe. They know who to talk to if they have a worry and know that it will be dealt with sensitively. Pupils are polite and well mannered. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. When bullying or incidents of inappropriate behaviour happen, leaders take swift and appropriate action.

Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the wide range of instruments they learn to play, including the cello, flute and keyboard. Staff set a positive role model through the staff choir, performing for pupils and the local community. Pupils learn about fundamental British values and different religions. They fully respect and understand that others' views may be different from their own.

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

Leaders have high expectations for what they expect all pupils to achieve, and these are realised. Parents typically praise how well led the school is in parental surveys. Leaders make sure that parents are kept well informed about how well their children achieve. Governors ask the right questions of leaders to hold them to account for the school's performance. Governors at all levels contribute to the school's success. They care about the well-being of staff and ensure that they are well supported.

Leaders have given careful thought to the curriculum to ensure that it is fit for purpose. In recent years, they have made deliberate decisions about the important concepts and knowledge pupils are taught. Staff have received training so that they can teach the curriculum effectively. This is evident in reading and mathematics but is not consistent in a small number of subjects. Some teachers' subject knowledge is not as strong as is needed to implement the curriculum as leaders intend. This means that in a small number of subjects, pupils do not develop a deep enough understanding of important knowledge needed for future learning.

Leaders prioritise early reading. Teachers focus on teaching pupils to read with fluency and accuracy. Leaders are passionate that pupils should develop a love of reading. They encourage this throughout the school day and at home. A consistent approach to teaching phonics is in place. Staff are trained to teach phonics and do so effectively. Pupils enjoy talking about books they are reading and their favourite authors. Leaders make checks on how well pupils are learning to read and swiftly help pupils catch up if they need to. Pupils achieve well in reading.

Leaders are committed to making sure that parents are involved every step of the way in their children's education, including for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers use a range of strategies, drawing on professional external advice, to help pupils with SEND. They target areas including communication and reading well. This has a positive impact on individual pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND are supported effectively to achieve well.

Children in the early years are well cared for and nurtured. The learning environment has been developed and is well organised. Staff set high expectations for what they expect children to learn and how to behave. They have devised a curriculum that is well sequenced, taking into account what children need to know when they begin Year 1. Leaders have improved practices for making sure that children get off to a good start in early years and as they progress into Year 1. Children are now better prepared to begin Year 1. The success of this early work endures through the school.

Leaders make sure that pupils are provided with a range of wider opportunities and experiences. These are linked to curriculum aims and pupils' development needs. Pupils take part in educational visits to, for example, Dudley Castle, the National Space Centre and the Natural History Museum in London. Extra-curricular activities are inclusive and include choir, orchestra, trampolining and pony club. Pupils take responsibility for their school community through an array of leadership roles. These include garden ambassador, school councillor and eco-committee member. They take these roles very seriously and take great pride in helping to improve their school community.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding culture is strong. Staff are knowledgeable about what to look out for and know how to report any concerns. They are extremely vigilant and care deeply about what happens to the most vulnerable pupils. Pupils say that it is a safe school. They know

who they would go to if they have a worry and are confident that it would be dealt with properly. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and in the local community. Local governors and directors make sure that rigorous checks are in place to assure themselves that pupils are kept safe.

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

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

- Not all staff have the subject-specific knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum in a small number of foundation subjects as intended. As a result, these subjects are not consistently taught as well as they could be. Leaders should ensure that staff develop the expertise they need to teach all subjects equally well.

## **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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2018.

## **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>	141827
<b>Local authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10257021
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	484
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Dr. Christopher Walker
<b>Principal</b>	Victoria Minihane
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmaryscpa.co.uk">www.stmaryscpa.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school's last section 48 inspection was in July 2017. The school's next inspection will be within eight years of the previous section 48 inspection.
- The school joined the St Francis and St Clare multi-academy company (MAC) in September 2019.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the principal, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, governors including the chair of the governing body,

directors of the St Francis and St Clare MAC and a representative from the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, spoke to teachers, visited lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the principal and vice principal, who are the designated safeguarding leaders. Pupils' case files were reviewed. The single central record of checks on staff's suitability to work with children was scrutinised.
- The lead inspector met with staff to discuss their workload and the support they receive to carry out their roles.
- The lead inspector spoke to pupils about how safe they feel in school and how they learn to keep themselves safe.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, the staff and pupil questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Emma Titchener, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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