

# Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Maidenhead

Cookham Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 7EG

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Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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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

Good

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

Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy their many opportunities to hold leadership positions and the responsibilities these bring. These positions include head pupils, house captains, school councillors and chicken monitors. Pupils appreciate having a voice in school-wide decision-making, and they are thoughtful about how they use it. For example, the sports leaders are keen to encourage fellow pupils to be physically active through the re-introduction of their 'daily mile' activity.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and communicate them through the school's 'STAR' values and the rules of 'ready, respectful and safe'. Pupils live up to these expectations and are motivated by the rewards on offer in celebration assemblies. They are polite and engage well with staff, showing the strength in these relationships. Pupils have no worries about bullying or unkind behaviour as they are rightly confident in staff dealing with these rare incidents. They feel safe and well cared for at school.

Pupils enjoy their learning, and in some subjects they achieve well. However, this is not yet the case across the whole curriculum. Parents recognise that the school is on a journey under new leadership, and they welcome the changes the headteacher is making.

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

The school's new leaders, governors and trustees are determined to improve academic outcomes for all pupils. They are knowledgeable about what needs to be done and have started the journey to embed a new and ambitious curriculum. In many subjects, including physical education, leaders have utilised materials from published schemes to provide an overall curriculum structure. In mathematics, where this is particularly successful, leaders have clearly identified the key learning that pupils need to encounter as they progress through the school. This means that teaching helps to deepen pupils' mathematical understanding and they achieve well. In some subjects, this work is at an earlier stage and has not been treated with the urgency it needs. In these curriculum areas, leaders' actions have not yet resulted in the creation of a clear learning journey.

The teaching of reading has only recently been prioritised, and improvements are in their infancy. This means that staff are not consistent in the way they teach pupils how to read. The recently introduced phonics scheme is not well-known by all staff, particularly those who are supporting older pupils with their reading. Pupils' reading books do not always match the sounds they are learning. In Reception, activities with an intended phonics focus do not always make the phonics learning clear. Leaders are keen to further promote a love of reading through the restoration of the school's library. Older pupils enjoy the texts they encounter through the curriculum, and they are motivated to read through their access to an online reading service.

In many subjects, teachers successfully adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils and build on their interests. The leadership of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. The special educational needs coordinator makes sure that teachers accurately identify pupils with SEND and provide appropriate support. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to help all pupils remember their learning through a range of methods, including 'Flashback Four' and enjoyable quizzes. However, in English and some wider subjects, teachers are less sure about what pupils have learned before and where their current learning fits in. In these subjects, this affects all pupils' ability to achieve as well as they should.

Reception-age children are given many opportunities to strengthen their physical development. They enjoy their time in the outdoor area and forest school, where they climb, play in the mud kitchen and dig in the sandpit. Staff help them to build their social skills by encouraging sharing and turn-taking. However, staff are not consistent in the way they support children in discussing their learning and building their vocabulary.

Pupils benefit from leaders' consideration of their wider development. They understand the school's values and are equally accepting of views presented in other religions and cultures. Pupils have a clear understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, including the need to have a balanced and nutritious diet. They know what puberty means and the emotional and physical changes that will occur as they get older. Pupils have a secure understanding of how and why they should take care when they are using the internet. As one pupil said, 'If you don't consider online safety, it would be like leaving your front door open for anyone to come in.'

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff receive regular and relevant safeguarding training. This means that any concerns are accurately identified and reported, using the school's clear systems. Leaders appropriately refer these concerns to other agencies to secure support for families. Leaders do not, however, always actively follow up these concerns to check that support is in place and continue to share pertinent information. Pupils feel safe at school and are confident in knowing who they can talk to if they have any worries. The governing body routinely monitors the effectiveness of the school's procedures, including the checks carried out during staff recruitment.

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

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

- The curriculum design is still a work in progress. As a result, teachers are not able to build on pupils' prior learning effectively. Leaders, including subject leaders,

must identify the specific knowledge and sequence of learning across all subjects, so that pupils know and remember more.

- Leaders have committed to a phonics programme, but it is not sufficiently embedded across the school. This means that some children do not read as well as they could, including older pupils who need additional support. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to teach phonics effectively.
- In Reception, teaching staff do not focus enough on developing children's spoken language. As a result, children do not always have the vocabulary to confidently engage in conversation about their learning. Leaders should ensure that all staff understand how to promote learning-based discussions by modelling language and building on children's responses.

## 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>	139882
<b>Local authority</b>	Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241030
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	307
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Gaynor Rennicks
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rosemary Akehurst
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmarys-maidenhead.org.uk">www.stmarys-maidenhead.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 and 11 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school is part of the Frassati Catholic Academy Trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## 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. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, English, mathematics, physical education and art. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View and parents' written comments. An inspector also talked with groups of parents on the morning of the first day of inspection.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff to gather their views about the school and took account of staff's responses to Ofsted's confidential staff questionnaire.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders as part of the inspection process. The lead inspector met with the chair of the trust and members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. She also had a call with the school's improvement partner and a representative from the local authority.

### **Inspection team**

Kate Fripp, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jon Hills

Ofsted Inspector

James Lovell

Ofsted Inspector

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