

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Falmouth

Mongleath Road, Falmouth, Cornwall TR11 4PW

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2023

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

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders want pupils to do well. However, the curriculum design in some subjects does not help pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to learn as well as they could.

Pupils consider themselves to be valued members of the school community. They have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. Learning is rarely disturbed. Pupils show care and consideration for each other. They understand the school rules. Pupils say there are many trusted adults they can turn to if they have any worries. This helps them to feel happy and safe.

Pupils learn to be tolerant and respectful of each other. They are polite and courteous. Pupils value their friendships. They have a secure understanding of what bullying is. Pupils learn about the different types of bullying as part of the curriculum. They are clear that bullying is not tolerated.

Some parents show frustration at the lack of communication from leaders and how concerns they raise are dealt with. Parents also say they do not receive enough helpful information about their child's progress.

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

Leaders have made recent improvements to the curriculum. However, in some subjects, the most important knowledge pupils need to know has not been clearly identified. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, do not learn as well as they could. Pupils develop gaps in their knowledge. Teachers take steps to identify misconceptions pupils have. However, too often, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to revisit and consolidate their learning. Some pupils find it hard to build knowledge well.

Leaders consider how assessment will help teachers to understand what pupils know and remember. However, in some subjects, teachers do not always use assessment well enough to adapt learning based on what pupils know and can do. Pupils have limited opportunities to deepen their understanding. Consequently, they do not know and remember enough of their learning.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of early reading and phonics. Staff have a secure understanding of the school's approach to reading. They model sounds with accuracy. Staff spot pupils who fall behind with the phonics programme. They give pupils the help they need to catch up quickly. Pupils read books from a carefully chosen selection. This helps to develop their vocabulary. Leaders ensure that pupils' books match their reading ability. As a result, pupils develop into fluent and confident readers.

Children begin to develop their love of reading in the early years. Teachers provide regular opportunities for children to listen to stories and rhymes. Children quickly

settle into the established routines set by teachers. They respond well to the high expectations all staff have of them. Teachers carefully set out the vocabulary children will learn. They provide a range of opportunities for children to use their new vocabulary during independent learning. This prepares children well for the curriculum in Year 1.

Leaders act on guidance from other professionals when considering how to best support the needs of pupils with SEND. However, some staff are unsure about how to adapt learning to help pupils with SEND to access the curriculum successfully. In addition, some pupils have learning targets that are too broad to be useful. This makes it hard for teachers to check with accuracy that pupils are gaining the knowledge and skills they need.

Pupils take part in a range of extra-curricular clubs and represent the school at sports events. This helps to develop their resilience, confidence and teamwork skills. Pupils have roles of responsibility, such as being a 'well-being ambassador'. They carry out their responsibilities with pride. Pupils learn about their local community and the wider world. They respect differences and feel proud to speak out for what they think is right. Pupils contribute to local charitable projects. Through this, they learn about the importance of helping others.

Staff feel that leaders consider their workload when making decisions about the school. They feel able to ask for help and valued by leaders. Staff appreciate the professional development opportunities provided by being part of the trust. Those who are new to teaching consider leaders to be supportive and responsive to their development needs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe. They learn how to identify risks through the curriculum and in assemblies. Leaders use specialists to teach pupils about aspects of safety, such as appropriate touch and consent.

Leaders provide regular safeguarding training. This helps staff to remain vigilant for signs that pupils may be at risk. Staff record and report concerns about pupils without delay. Leaders take action to provide support for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Leaders make the appropriate checks on new staff during recruitment. However, these checks are not collated and organised as efficiently as they could be.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the most important knowledge pupils need to gain is not clear.

As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they could and have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders must ensure that the most important knowledge is clearly defined so pupils can learn well.

- Teachers do not use assessment well enough to understand what pupils know and remember. Learning is not adapted well enough to fill gaps in pupils' knowledge. Some pupils develop misconceptions and do not remember enough of their learning. Leaders need to ensure that teachers use assessment to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and inform future learning.
- Some pupils with SEND have learning targets that are too broad. Some teachers are unable to use this information to meet pupils' needs precisely. Pupils do not learn as well as they could. Leaders must ensure that pupils' targets are precise so that teachers can support them to gain the knowledge and skills they need.
- Some parents have negative views of the school. They shared frustration about the communication they receive from leaders and how leaders deal with their concerns. Pupils do not benefit from strong home and school partnerships. Leaders need to ensure that there is effective communication between school and home so that parents can work with the school to support their child's education.

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	140775
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10256639
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	205
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ruth O'Donovan
Headteacher	Alison McDonald
Website	www.st-marys-fal.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Plymouth CAST, a multi-academy trust.
- This is a Roman Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection took place in October 2022.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.
- The executive headteacher leads this school and one other school. The deputy headteacher leads this school in her absence.
- There is an on-site before- and after-school club.

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.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: Early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with school leaders, subject leaders, parents, pupils and representatives from the trust.
- An inspector listened to pupils read.
- To evaluate safeguarding, inspectors spoke to the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also spoke with staff, governors and pupils, and evaluated record-keeping and staff training.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, and comments made by parents online during the inspection. They also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- During the inspection, leaders rectified the administrative errors in the single central record.

Inspection team

Jane Dennis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Esther Best

His Majesty's Inspector

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