

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Herringthorpe Valley Road, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S65 2NU

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 April 2023

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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

St Mary's is a caring, friendly school that nurtures warm, positive relationships between pupils, parents and staff. The school's Catholic values are reflected in the ethos of the school, where everyone is 'celebrated and valued'.

Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. They are respectful of each other and behave well. Bullying is rare. Pupils learn about different types of bullying so they can 'spot when something is not right'. Pupils say their school is an inclusive place where differences are recognised and celebrated. They take part in 'Odd Socks Day' and 'Dress as you Please Day' to show how they are all different and special.

Pupils are encouraged to become responsible and active members of the community by taking on roles such as play leaders, team captains and school councillors. The members of the school council are raising funds to repaint the mile a day track on the playground. Pupils lead prayers and have the opportunity to develop their faith through the GIFT (Growing in Faith Together) team.

Parents value the wide variety of extra-curricular activities on offer. Reception children recently took part in an Easter variety show at the local secondary school. One parent said, 'It gave me goosebumps to see the children beaming and performing confidently on stage at such a young age.'

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

Leaders have high expectations of pupils and staff. They are focused on providing a high-quality education for all. Since the last inspection, leaders have taken swift, decisive action to develop an ambitious curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge over time. They recognise that some subjects, such as computing, are in the early stages of implementation, but they are determined to continue the journey of curriculum improvement.

In lessons, teachers present information clearly and activities are well matched to the intended learning outcome. Pupils engage well in their lessons and talk confidently about what they have learned. In geography, older pupils spoke maturely about the impact of warfare and natural disasters on human migration.

Leaders have ensured that all staff understand the importance of pupils becoming confident, fluent readers as quickly as possible. Phonics is taught from the beginning of Reception, ensuring children get off to a flying start. Pupils who need extra help are identified quickly and get the support they need to catch up. Pupils' reading books are closely matched to the sounds they can read. This helps them to practise the sounds that they know and become confident readers. Staff receive regular, personalised training to deliver the phonics programme. Teaching assistants are proud to be 'teachers of reading'. Pupils enjoy reading and can talk about the books they have read.

Leaders have high ambitions for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers know these pupils well and use a range of strategies to remove barriers to learning for these pupils. This helps these pupils to access the same curriculum as their peers.

In some subjects, such as mathematics and early reading, teachers use assessment well to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, this is not the case in all subjects. Leaders recognise that they have not yet developed an effective system for checking what pupils know. As a result, leaders and teachers are unable to check if pupils have the necessary knowledge for future learning.

Children in the early years are happy, safe and well cared for. The curriculum has a strong emphasis on early literacy. Staff provide regular opportunities for children to develop their communication and language through singing songs, nursery rhymes and playing games. However, leaders have not identified the specific knowledge or vocabulary they want children to know and remember. As a result, staff are not always clear on the intended learning outcome of activities within the provision.

Pupils' personal development is an important part of the school's curriculum. Pupils are knowledgeable and can explain why fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law, are important for life in society. Pupils are respectful of the beliefs of others. They recognise that it is important to learn about different religions.

Leaders have developed strong relationships with parents. Parents are positive about the school and the quality of education and support their children receive. Leaders at all levels take staff workload and well-being into consideration. Staff appreciate this and feel supported by leaders. Staff and pupils also appreciate and value highly the emotional support they receive from the learning mentor.

Leaders at all levels are focused on ensuring that all are pupils are happy, safe and achieve highly so that they are prepared for their future.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a robust culture of safeguarding at St Mary's. Staff are well trained and vigilant to signs of harms. They are knowledgeable about the risks that children may face in the local community. The safeguarding team works closely with families and external agencies. They are tenacious in their actions to ensure that vulnerable children and families get the support they need. Leaders make the necessary checks to ensure the suitability of any adults working at the school.

Pupils feel safe and are safe. They know if they have any worries, they can talk to members of staff, who will listen to them and help them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not yet refined the curriculum so that the most important knowledge is clearly identified. This means that teachers are unable to check if pupils have the required knowledge for future learning. Leaders need to clearly identify the most important knowledge that all pupils, including those with SEND, need to know and then ensure that assessment is effective to check that pupils remember this knowledge.
- Leaders have not identified the specific knowledge or vocabulary that children need to know and remember in the early years. As a result, staff do not always know the intended learning outcomes of activities within the provision, and children's vocabulary is not developed as well as it could be. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum in the early years sets out the important knowledge and vocabulary that children need to know and remember in readiness for future 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

Unique reference number	139880
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10240133
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michael Jones
Headteacher	Anna Osborne
Website	www.stmarysherringthorpe.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 October 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- As a Catholic school, it is a part of the Diocese of Hallam. Its most recent section 48 inspection was in March 2018.
- The school does not currently make use of 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 second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to senior leaders, including the chair of the governing body, and other members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography and computing. 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 spoke with leaders about pupils with SEND and visited some pupils with SEND in lessons.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during breakfast club, playtime and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors checked the records that leaders keep about staff who work in the school. Inspectors checked procedures for identifying pupils who may be at risk of harm and what leaders do to ensure pupils are safe.
- Inspectors evaluated responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. The lead inspector spoke to some parents who were dropping their children off at school. Inspectors also evaluated the responses that staff and pupils made to Ofsted's online surveys.
- The lead inspector spoke to representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of Hallam.

Inspection team

Ruth Beckett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Peter Heaton

Ofsted Inspector

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