

Inspection of a good school: St. Mary Cray Primary Academy

High Street, St Mary Cray, Orpington, Kent BR5 4AR

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 April 2023

Outcome

St. Mary Cray Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders make sure that this is a supportive and welcoming school. They have high expectations of what pupils know and can do. Parents, carers and staff are very supportive of leaders' work to secure improvements. Leaders guide pupils to work together, respect one another and to be ambitious for their future careers.

Leaders have put in place an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff support children to develop their social skills and academic knowledge from the beginning of Reception.

Leaders expect pupils to listen to their teachers in class and to work hard, and pupils do this. Leaders encourage pupils to be polite and considerate. Pupils are safe, friendly and kind to each other. They are courteous and considerate.

Leaders organise outings for pupils in connection to what pupils learn through the curriculum. Leaders motivate pupils to develop their oracy skills through a debate club. Pupils attend clubs, including sign language, scratch coding and chess. Older pupils who are in the school's anti-bullying squad are responsible role models for younger pupils.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and comprehensive curriculum. They have ensured that pupils have access to a range of experiences and learning opportunities, both through the academic curriculum and beyond it.

Subject leaders' curriculum thinking is secure. For example, in history, leaders have outlined in detail all the knowledge and skills that pupils need to know from Reception to Year 6. Pupils in Year 4 explained why the Roman Empire collapsed and why the Romans subsequently left Britain. In some subjects, leaders are also redeveloping and improving their curriculum thinking to ensure that the core knowledge that pupils need to know is

identified and sequenced clearly for teachers and that teachers are confident to deliver it. In Reception, leaders have identified the key knowledge that children need to know in preparation for Year 1 and beyond.

The new headteacher has strengthened the teaching of early reading. All staff in the school have been trained to be experts in teaching early reading. In class, teachers introduce pupils to new letters and sounds in a logical order. They then check that pupils can understand and remember these sounds over time. Pupils take books home to read so that they can practise new sounds they have learned at school. Any pupils who need help to catch up receive it regularly.

In most subjects, teachers give pupils work that challenges them to think hard and helps pupils to learn and remember the curriculum effectively over time. However, sometimes, teachers do not check routinely that pupils understand what they have learned. This means that, sometimes, pupils do not fully grasp what they are learning and are less engaged in their learning than they could be.

All senior leaders work together closely to ensure that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers. They have recently introduced changes to make it easier for staff to identify and assess pupils who may need additional support.

Support is provided for pupils, when necessary, to ensure they are able to meet leaders' behaviour expectations. Teachers follow the school's approach to behaviour consistently and fairly. Teachers acknowledge when pupils work hard. In Reception, teachers encourage children to take turns, to thank one another and to share.

Leaders organise many opportunities for pupils beyond the curriculum. For example, pupils are taught how to make a wood fire safely and are motivated to build their resilience by learning outdoors in all weathers. All pupils are taught to swim. Leaders make use of the local area by taking pupils, including children in Reception, to libraries, farms and rivers. Pupils who take on the role of 'travel ambassadors' encourage their peers to travel to school as safely as possible.

Staff appreciate the changes that the new headteacher has introduced. Leaders and those responsible for governance are aware of their statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding. Staff comment that leaders consult them before they take important decisions and that their workload and well-being are taken into account when decisions are made.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff receive the training they need to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. All staff take responsibility for safeguarding and know how and where to report their concerns. Leaders communicate regularly with one another, parents and external partners as appropriate. Leaders provide staff with weekly safeguarding

information and training. Leaders also ensure that pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, both in and out of school and online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not systematically check that pupils understand and remember what they have been taught. Occasionally, pupils do not build curriculum knowledge because teachers have not checked that pupils understand what is taught, or pupils do not recall securely what they have learned. Leaders should ensure that staff routinely check that pupils understand what they learn and that they remember it in the long term.
- Leaders should ensure that they follow through with their plans to develop the curriculum in some subjects. This should include improving curriculum thinking and identifying the core knowledge that pupils need to know, ensuring that all staff are confident in their subject knowledge to deliver leaders' redesigned plans.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2017.

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	141117
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10255480
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Cliff
Headteacher	Gordon Jamieson
Website	st-marycray.bromley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 and 27 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses no alternative providers.
- The headteacher and other members of the school's leadership team have joined the school since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, music and mathematics.
- For each deep dive, 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.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.

- The inspector considered the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding and supporting pupils' health and safety, as well as their welfare and well-being. This included looking at case studies and reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher. The inspector also met with leaders with responsibility for SEND, early reading, personal development, and behaviour.
- The inspector met with representatives from the trust.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Guy Forbat, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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