

# Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Greenfield Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 1YH

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Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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## **What is it like to attend this school?**

All pupils feel included at St Mary's Catholic Primary School. Pupils value being part of such a diverse school. They understand the concept of equality and want everyone to feel included. Relationships throughout the school are respectful. Pupils describe their school as welcoming and friendly, saying this helps them to feel safe.

Pupils are expected to behave well and work hard. At playtimes, they include each other in games and enjoy using the exercise equipment. They get along well together and, as a result, bullying is rare. Pupils are confident to report any problems and say that incidents are quickly resolved by staff.

Pupils relish the many opportunities to contribute to the school community. They understand their roles as part of the school council, eco-council or as sports captains. Pupils take these responsibilities very seriously. Older pupils act as 'reading buddies' to support younger pupils to develop their enjoyment of reading. Pupils learn about how to be a good citizen. They are proud of their efforts to raise money for charities through sponsored reading and running events.

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

Leaders have designed a suitably balanced curriculum, which interests and engages pupils. Time is spent identifying the appropriate support to help pupils achieve. Particular attention is paid to ensuring that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly and accurately and are thoughtfully met.

The curriculum is well organised. It develops pupils' knowledge effectively, from early years to Year 6, across a broad range of subjects. As part of ongoing developments, a few foundation subjects have recently been updated. In these subjects, leaders have not yet had enough opportunity to check that their improvements are helping pupils learn and remember more.

Staff have strong subject knowledge, which helps them to deliver the curriculum well. They quickly identify where pupils have gaps in their knowledge and address these quickly so that learning does not slow down. Teachers adapt activities carefully so that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum. This helps to ensure that pupils with SEND, and those pupils who are disadvantaged, take part in all that the school has to offer. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education as they move through the school and beyond.

Leaders ensure that learning to read is a priority. From the early years onwards, pupils benefit from following a clear phonics programme. They build their confidence because staff ensure that they can practise reading books that match the sounds they know. Pupils explore high-quality texts and reading activities daily. Through

this, they develop a wide vocabulary and strong comprehension skills. Staff swiftly identify and respond if a pupil finds reading more difficult, so they soon catch up. Because of this, pupils become confident, fluent and successful readers. They enjoy using the well-stocked library at lunchtimes. Here, older pupils act as librarians. Pupils are also inspired by the many visiting authors and taking part in activities such as exploring the question, 'What's the craziest way you can read?'

In lessons, pupils mostly behave very well. They follow instructions and listen attentively to their teachers. Pupils enjoy learning and are keen to learn. They readily answer questions and offer ideas to demonstrate their growing knowledge and confidence.

Leaders ensure that the personal development curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain and as global citizens. A wide range of additional clubs and activities, such as multi-sports, coding and gymnastics, help pupils to widen their interests and stay active and healthy.

Governors have a well-informed view of the school's curriculum. They systematically hold leaders to account to support ongoing improvement. Most staff, including those at the early stages of their careers, feel that leaders consider their workload and that their professional development is well supported. However, governors have not ensured that their systems to engage with staff and for staff to raise and report any concerns are sufficiently clear and well developed. This hampers efforts to fully consider staff well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have robust systems in place to ensure they can swiftly respond to and follow up on any safeguarding concerns. Any adult who works in the school has regular safeguarding training. Staff use their training well to identify and report concerns.

Leaders are tenacious in their approach to ensuring that the right support is in place for vulnerable pupils. They work closely with external agencies to support and protect pupils who are at risk of harm.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is adapted to reflect pupils' lives and needs.

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

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

- In a few subjects, subject leaders have not yet assessed and evaluated the impact of the curriculum improvements they have been implementing. This

means that subject leaders are not yet secure in knowing how well the curriculum supports pupils to learn effectively. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders have the training they need to focus on evaluating the curriculum.

- Governors do not have sufficiently clear processes in place to consider the views of staff. This means that staff are unclear how to report their views or raise any appropriate concerns to governors. Governors must ensure that there are clear processes in place to gauge the views and communicate with staff.

## 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>	118782
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256378
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	439
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Mark Ndekwe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Maureen Grabski
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmarysrcp.medway.sch.uk">www.stmarysrcp.medway.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 October 2017

## Information about this school

- The school belongs to the Archdiocese of Southwark. The last section 48 inspection of the school under the Education Act 2005 for schools of a religious character was carried out in November 2017.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- Several senior leaders are new to the school and have joined during this academic year.

## 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.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector met regularly with school leaders. The lead inspector also met with representatives from the governing body and had

telephone conversations with representatives from the local authority and the Archdiocese of Southwark.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, science, computing and physical education. For each deep dive, the 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. The lead inspector listened to pupils read to an adult from the school.
- Safeguarding records were reviewed, including the single central record and appointment procedures. Inspectors spoke to staff about safeguarding and spoke to pupils about the support they have in understanding how to keep safe.
- The inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys. They spoke to some parents at the school gates.
- The inspectors talked to staff to gather their views about the school, including about their workload and well-being. They met with several groups of pupils, as well as speaking to pupils during lessons and at playtime and lunchtime.

## Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Liz McIntosh	Ofsted Inspector
Andrea Carter	Ofsted Inspector

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