

Inspection of St Mary's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School

7 St Joseph's Street, London SW8 4EN

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 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?

Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. Leaders have established a strong sense of community. Pupils behave well and take their lessons seriously. Teachers establish routines for calm and sensible behaviour from entry in the Nursery. Pupils in Year 6 take on the role of peer mediators at breaktime. They help pupils to resolve issues when they occur.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils. The curriculum gives pupils a strong understanding of a broad range of subjects in readiness for secondary school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do well here. Specialist teachers deliver lessons in computing, physical education and music.

Leaders make the most of educational opportunities on their doorstep to enhance pupils' learning of the curriculum. Pupils in all year groups enjoy a variety of educational outings each year. Leaders link visits to museums and art galleries to what pupils have learned in lessons. Pupils take part in enterprise activities, including coding projects with local businesses.

Teachers encourage pupils to develop a sense of community and citizenship. For example, pupils take part in fundraising events to raise money for charity. Eco-ambassadors in Year 5 research air pollution in the local area and plan healthy routes to school.

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

Leaders have redesigned the curriculum in recent years to be more ambitious than in the past for pupils. They have identified the key knowledge they want pupils to learn in each subject. Teachers know the subjects they teach well. They explain new learning clearly. The activities that pupils do help them to embed what they have learned in the long term.

Teachers break new learning down into smaller steps. For example, in mathematics, teachers encourage pupils to talk through their answers. This helps them to understand each step when they solve problems. They can then apply what they know to more challenging questions. Teachers are skilled in checking what pupils know. They adapt their lessons skilfully to address misconceptions as they arise.

Leaders ensure that pupils explore their learning further outside the classroom. For example, pupils in Year 4 study the life of the Romans and take a walking tour of London to look at Roman remains and learn about their legacy on life in modern Britain. In the early years, children learn about the world around them, for example through growing their own strawberries and learning about the life cycles of plants and butterflies.

Pupils of all ages love to read. Teachers bring stories to life through the curriculum. Pupils take part in reading lessons each day. Pupils in Year 5 read books with younger pupils. In the early years, teachers encourage children to speculate about the emotions and motivations of the characters in the stories they hear. Staff are well trained to develop children's language and communication skills.

The early reading phonics programme starts from Reception. Staff accurately model sounds for pupils. Pupils learn to blend these sounds with increasing fluency over time. Occasionally, teaching activities in phonics sessions are not well selected to support pupils' phonics learning. Staff support pupils who fall behind in the phonics programme and those who join part way through their primary education at the early stages of learning to read with additional reading sessions.

Pupils are proud of their school. They listen to the instructions of their teachers and work hard in lessons. Nursery staff help children to develop their social skills, including listening and taking turns. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils are encouraged to take on leadership roles around the school. Those who do, develop their confidence and are role models for their peers. For example, pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 act as Faith Friends, leading prayers in assembly.

Leaders ensure that teachers identify pupils with SEND as early as possible. Staff know how to support pupils with SEND in the classroom. Leaders provide school-based therapy services.

Leaders and members of the school's governing body are mindful of the well-being of staff. They think about staff workload when making decisions about the school. Staff appreciate the opportunities given to collaborate with each other and local teaching networks. Leaders provide effective support for teachers in the early stages of their career to develop their classroom practice.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know the pupils and their families well. Leaders have ensured that policies and procedures for managing safeguarding concerns are clear and are understood by all staff. Staff are alert to signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Leaders work effectively with outside agencies to secure help swiftly for pupils who are vulnerable to harm.

Pupils are taught about risk and how to stay safe. This includes how to stay safe in their local area and online. They are taught the importance of keeping healthy and are encouraged to look after their physical and mental health.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some cases, phonics sessions include a range of different activities that can detract from learning phonics sounds. As a result, occasionally teaching is not as helpful as it could be in enabling pupils to learn the strategies they need to decode unknown words. Leaders should ensure that teachers focus sharply on the phonics sounds that pupils are 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	101048
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10242083
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Cooper and Rex Wickham (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Jared Brading (Executive headteacher) Claire Mitchell (Associate headteacher)
Website	www.stmarysschoolbattersea.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2017, under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a Roman Catholic religious character. The school had its last section 48 inspection by the Diocese of Southwark in March 2019.
- Leaders do not 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the associate headteacher and other school leaders. They also met with members of the governing body, including the two co-chairs. They spoke to the school improvement partner from the local authority.

- Inspectors conducted deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, science and geography. Inspectors met with curriculum leaders and classroom teachers. They visited lessons and reviewed the work of pupils. They also visited a wider sample of subject lessons across the curriculum, including visits to the early years.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including school policies, records of pupils' attendance rates and behaviour, and school improvement reports.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders, pupils and staff about the arrangements for safeguarding and reviewed safeguarding documentation, including pre-employment checks on staff.
- Inspectors held meetings with teaching staff, including early career teachers and non-teaching staff. They reviewed responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils of different ages across the school. They also reviewed pupils' responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents at the school gates. They also considered the views of parents who made responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Annabel Davies, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Janice Howkins

Ofsted Inspector

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