

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School – a Catholic voluntary academy

Cross Lanes, Richmond, North Yorkshire DL10 7DZ

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils behave well and feel safe in this school. They are well cared for by the adults, who know them well. When pupils join the school, they quickly become part of a caring community. Links with the local church are well established and pupils are active within their parish community.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' achievement. This starts in the early years, where the curriculum has been well thought through to support pupils to learn. By the end of key stage 2, pupils have the skills that help them to be ready to move to secondary education.

Pupils are proud of the work that they do at school to support others, such as creating their own small foodbank. They enjoy the many after-school clubs on offer, such as archery, dodgeball, football and dancing club. Pupils also appreciate the opportunity to take on responsibilities, for example as eco-warriors, school councillors and members of Mini-Vinnies.

Pupils feel safe and are happy here. They trust the adults in school to help them. They understand how leaders and staff expect them to behave. They are highly respectful of each other and of adults. This makes the school a calm and orderly place. Pupils follow the school's rules well. Pupils said that any incidents of poor behaviour, including rare instances of bullying, are sorted out fairly and effectively. Children in the early years play happily together. Older pupils said that if they had a problem at playtime, they could speak to staff to help them resolve any problems.

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

Leaders have introduced a new curriculum that allows pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, to develop rich knowledge and understanding. Leaders have rigorously developed this curriculum. It is coherently organised. For example, in science, leaders have structured learning carefully so that pupils' knowledge builds up from the early years through to Year 6. In physical education, skills are developed methodically. Teachers ensure that pupils revisit prior learning regularly. This helps pupils to remember learning. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use it effectively in order to implement the curriculum. Pupils have a secure understanding of their learning and talk about learning with confidence. For instance, in science, pupils use scientific vocabulary fluently and accurately.

In some subjects, leaders are still developing assessment systems that are closely matched to the curriculum. Currently, not all teachers are using these assessment systems consistently. This results in staff not always knowing when there are gaps in pupils' understanding.

Leaders have prioritised effective systems to ensure pupils with SEND are quickly identified. Leaders then support these pupils by adapting teaching, or identifying resources to help pupils make progress. However, some adaptations are not precisely tailored to pupils' individual needs. This means that, from time to time, these pupils do not consolidate their understanding as quickly as they might.

From the moment that children arrive in the early years, leaders ensure that they benefit from a well-structured approach to learning phonics. Staff are highly knowledgeable about early reading because of the training that they receive. Staff match reading books well to the sounds that pupils are learning. As a result, almost all pupils become confident, fluent readers by the end of Year 2. Across the school, pupils have access to a wide range of books. They enjoy reading and do so regularly. Teachers identify pupils who are falling behind and provide targeted support to help them to catch up.

Leaders prioritise pupils' mental health and well-being through effective support and mentoring. Leaders successfully develop pupils' awareness and understanding of equality and diversity. As a result, pupils know why democracy, respect and tolerance are important. This prepares them well for later life.

Members of the governing body are proud to be a part of the school community. They are highly knowledgeable about many aspects of the school. They support and challenge leaders to help them to improve the school. Governors and trustees share a common vision and want pupils to achieve. All staff enjoy working at the school and value the support that leaders and governors provide. Staff appreciate the steps that leaders have taken to make their workload more manageable and, in some cases, more family friendly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know pupils well. They work closely with pupils, and their families, to check on and look after their well-being. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and know how to keep pupils safe. Staff identify pupils who may be vulnerable. They diligently pass on any concerns to leaders responsible for safeguarding. Leaders are tenacious in following up on these concerns. They ensure that pupils and their families get timely support if they need it. Leaders ensure that pupils receive highly effective support for their emotional health and well-being.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and offline. They know that they should speak out if they are made to feel uncomfortable by other pupils or adults.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some targets for pupils with SEND do not specify the precise knowledge or skills that are to be developed. This means that some small steps in learning are missed, and pupils find learning difficult. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the training to develop precise, achievable, and measurable targets for pupils with SEND.
- Some assessment processes are still being developed. This means that gaps in learning are not always being identified quickly. Leaders need to ensure that assessment criteria is closely matched to the curriculum and that staff regularly and effectively assess pupils' understanding.

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	147241
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10268559
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joseph Hughes
Headteacher	Fran Mackle
Website	www.stmarysrcprimaryrichmond.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School – a Catholic voluntary school converted to become an academy school in July 2019. When its predecessor school, St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Richmond, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall. St Mary's Catholic Primary School – a Catholic voluntary school is part of the Nicholas Postgate Trust. The school joined the trust in September 2022.
- The last section 48 inspection (conducted by the Diocese of Middlesbrough Schools' Service for the previous school) was in July 2018. That school, St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Richmond, was judged to be good. The next inspection from the Catholic Education Inspectorate is due before July 2026.

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 spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff. Inspectors spoke with advisory staff and standards officers from the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust, governors, including the chair of the local governing board, trustees from the trust and the assistant chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They looked at a range of documentation and spoke to leaders and staff about safeguarding. Inspectors also spoke to pupils to ascertain if they feel safe in school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, science and physical education. For each deep dive inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. Inspectors also spoke to leaders and pupils about the curriculum in other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation shared by school leaders, including the school development plan, minutes from meetings of the governing body and leaders' self-evaluation document.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View, along with responses to the pupil survey and the staff survey. Inspectors spoke informally to parents outside the school.

Inspection team

David Hodgkiss, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Angela Spencer-Brooke	Ofsted Inspector

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