

Inspection of St Mary's RC Infants School

West Street, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 2PT

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy at this school. A nurturing, caring and supportive ethos threads through every aspect of school life. Pupils said that St Mary's is a school where 'they have kind hands, and sharing is caring.'

Pupils are kept safe. They trust the adults in school and know that they are available to listen and help with any worries, should they need to. The curriculum is planned so that pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe.

Pupils are incredibly proud of their school and their achievements and learning. They spoke with great excitement about the numerous extra-curricular activities that they take part in. For instance, pupils enjoy being a member of the choir and participating in football club.

Leaders at all levels and staff have high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from the ambitious curriculum the school offers. Pupils meet the high expectations set for them and learn well.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. Pupils know inside out the six core principles of the school's approach to promoting positive behaviour. They describe these values eloquently, explaining how they help them to know how to behave, both in lessons and at playtimes. For example, pupils know how to show respect and be kind to one another.

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

Leaders at all levels have skilfully crafted an ambitious and broad curriculum for all pupils. They have carefully planned out the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn from Nursery through to Year 2. Learning in each year group builds well on what pupils have learned previously. For example, in geography, Year 1 pupils learn about the four countries that make up the United Kingdom. This knowledge builds well on what pupils already know about the world around them. Another example is in music. In early years, children learn about beats in music, and this is subsequently revisited and developed in Year 2 when they learn to play the djembe.

The highly ambitious curriculum in early years gives children an excellent start to their schooling. Staff are skilled in ensuring that children learn and practise the knowledge set out in the curriculum, including in early reading and mathematics. Children with additional needs are quickly identified, with advice from external professionals sought and put into practice. In all curriculum areas, the development of language is prioritised. Frequent sharing of high-quality books and stories plays a key role in helping children to hear and know more words.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and teach the intended curriculum effectively. Staff explain learning well. They are skilled at adapting their teaching

strategies for pupils with SEND so that these pupils access the same learning as their peers.

Teachers make purposeful use of their checks on what pupils know. They are clear about what pupils have learned and the knowledge that needs to be revisited. Pupils confidently recall and remember their learning. Pupils with SEND are identified swiftly. The school makes sure that these pupils are offered additional support, and this is tailored to meet their needs.

Reading is a priority. The school works closely with parents and carers to help them know how to support their children with reading at home. Pupils enjoy listening to the stories read to them regularly. Overall, the school's approach to teaching phonics supports pupils to learn to read well. Those who are falling behind with their phonics and reading receive regular extra support so that they catch up with their peers. However, in Years 1 and 2, occasionally, the additional help is not as effective as the school intends it to be. This is because it is not focused with sufficient precision on enabling these pupils to gain quickly the phonics knowledge that they need to become fluent, confident readers.

Pupils are highly enthusiastic learners. They remain focused on the tasks that teachers give them. Low-level disruption is rare. An extremely calm and orderly environment prevails in classrooms and around the school. The school has taken effective action to ensure that pupils attend school regularly, with support provided for pupils and families when needed. All of this contributes well to pupils' achievement.

The school offers pupils excellent opportunities to support their personal development. Pupils' learning is enriched beyond the classroom through many educational trips, including to the local ecology centre, museums and other places of interest. Pupils learn about how to be responsible global citizens and are taught to think of others who are less fortunate than themselves. This includes, for example, getting involved in raising funds for charities, both locally and further afield. Pupils with SEND are fully included in all aspects of school life.

Staff value leaders' efforts to help them keep a work-life balance. Looking after everyone's well-being is a priority for the school. Teachers who are at the early stages of their teaching careers are well supported.

Parents appreciate the work of the school. Those who responded to Ofsted Parent View commented that they like the broad range of subjects offered to their children.

The governing body fulfils its duties effectively. Its work is centred on the strong belief that every pupil matters and is entitled to a broad and ambitious curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While pupils who fall behind in phonics are identified and offered additional support, in a few instances, this support is not as effective as the school intends. This means that a small number of pupils are not catching up as quickly as they could. The school should ensure that these pupils consistently receive the additional help that is needed to become confident and fluent readers quickly.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	102995
Local authority	Sutton
Inspection number	10268773
Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	288
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Bernard Tomkins
Headteacher	Shirley Hulme
Website	www.smcsc.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school has a Catholic religious character and is within the Archdiocese of Southwark. The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in March 2018.
- This school is part of St Mary's Catholic Federation, Carshalton, which includes St Mary's Junior School. The junior school is on a separate site.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The breakfast club and after-school clubs are provided by an external organisation.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, music and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils reading to a member of staff. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; held a meeting with the designated safeguarding lead; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interest first.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body. She held telephone conversations with representatives from the local authority and the Archdiocese of Southwark.
- Inspectors took into consideration the responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents, pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Rajeshree Mehta, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Ridding	Ofsted Inspector
Alex Hayes	Ofsted Inspector

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