

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Station Road, Chingford, London E4 7BJ

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Mary's school is friendly and welcoming to pupils, staff and visitors alike. Pupils enter each morning happy and ready to learn.

The school ensures that all pupils in the school have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Children in the Reception class get off to a good start. They are confident and settle in quickly. Children join in enthusiastically with a range of activities that help them to develop.

Pupils enjoy their learning, they appreciate the improvements the school is making to the curriculum and talk about the things they have learned and how their teachers support them. Pupils encourage others, for example, by becoming ambassadors for areas, such as music, science and reading.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences as they move through the school. They learn about the world outside of their own community, often taking trips to local sites of interest. Leaders make sure that the programme of extra-curricular activities contributes to pupils' personal development.

The school has high expectations of pupil behaviour. Pupils are unfailingly polite and helpful to others. Pupils are safe at school and are clear that bullying does not happen. They are very clear about the difference between disagreement and bullying.

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

The curriculum at St Mary's shows ambition for all its pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

In Reception, children build up their knowledge well. Leaders have thought carefully about how to get children ready for what they will be taught in subsequent year groups. Phonics is taught from the beginning of Reception. Staff deliver phonics in a structured way, developing pupils' knowledge in a logical order. Staff identify any pupils who have fallen behind and offer them extra help, so they can catch up with their peers. Staff also provide information to parents and carers, so they can support their child with their reading at home. However, sometimes, pupils are given books to read that use sounds the pupil knows well and not the sounds they are learning in class. This can slow pupils' reading development. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to write purposefully through a varied range of contexts, including persuasive writing and the writing of instructions.

The school has carefully considered the key mathematical concepts that pupils need to know and how these build over time in complexity. Pupils' work is of high quality and well presented, demonstrating the pride that pupils take in their work. Teachers check pupils' understanding and revisit prior learning to consolidate where needed.

The school quickly identifies pupils with SEND and then writes a 'My additional support plan'. This plan identifies the pupil's needs and the extra support that is required, such as concrete resources, their own desk or a visual timetable. The school works with a range of external agencies to access specialist advice or input.

In some subjects, the curriculum is not fully embedded or leaders are still in the process of identifying the most important knowledge that pupils need to be taught and the order in which they should learn it. Teachers are growing in confidence in their delivery of the revised subjects, but the impact of these changes has not fully filtered through to pupils' achievement.

Pupils appreciate the positive behaviour of their classmates as it enables them to concentrate on their learning. They discuss their work with maturity, for example the reading ambassadors talk eagerly about their favourite books. A new policy helps pupils to understand and reflect on their own behaviour and teachers to quickly identify any pupils who need extra support. Pupils' attendance at school is extremely high.

The personal development offer at this school is exemplary. Pupils speak at length about their leadership roles, which include opportunities to act as peer mentors, eco-warriors and music ambassadors.

School teams take part in lots of inter-school sports events. For example, the girls' football team have achieved recent success in a competition. There is a wide range of after-school clubs and activities, including instrumental lessons, a choir that takes part in local music events and charity fundraising events. Pupils with SEND are encouraged to take part in special events and clubs alongside their classmates.

Leaders strive to make St Mary's the very best school it can be. Staff have received training related to the new aspects of the curriculum and take advantage of membership of subject associations to enrich and improve their teaching. Staff feel appreciated and leaders take workload and well-being into account when making decisions.

Governors know the school extremely well. They understand their statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding. They are especially proud of pupils' caring and confident behaviour. They recognise the skills and hard work of the staff but are ready to challenge and question them where necessary.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, the school has not finalised the important knowledge they want pupils to learn. Sometimes, in these subjects, the curriculum is not implemented consistently well. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could in these subjects. The school should ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is clearly identified and implemented consistently.

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	103085
Local authority	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10242341
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Daniel Murray
Headteacher	Philomena Egan
Website	www.stmaryschingford.com/
Date of previous inspection	5 March 2009 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is designated as having a religious character. The school is in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brentwood. The school's most recent section 48 inspection was in March 2020.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.

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 received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, 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 lead inspector listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with the special educational needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with three members of the governing body and also spoke to representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils at social times and met with several groups of pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' improvement plans and records of governing body meetings. They also reviewed the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspectors took account of 124 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, including 81 written messages using Ofsted's free-text facility.
- Inspectors also considered 67 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and 17 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Eleanor Ross, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lisa Strong

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023