

Inspection of St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School

Weston Crescent, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands WS9 0HA

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 July 2024

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?

Everyone is welcome at this happy and caring school. Staff know all the pupils as individuals. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and respectful. Because of this, pupils feel happy and safe at school. The school is proud to be at the heart of the community.

The school's values and ethos permeate throughout all aspects of school life. Pupils are well mannered and behave with respect and thoughtfulness. Pupils are very supportive of each other. One pupil echoed the views of many when they stated, 'Friends are right beside us, nobody is left out.'

The school has high expectations for all pupils to succeed. Most pupils achieve highly, particularly in English and mathematics.

Older pupils learn the importance of responsibility through the opportunities the school provides to take on many leadership roles. They do this with enthusiasm.

The school develops pupils' talents and interests well. Pupils benefit from many activities that enhance the curriculum, including various school trips and enrichment days. Pupils have many clubs to choose from, including sports, gardening, and the popular choir, who enjoy performing in community events and at a local care home.

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

The school has planned a broad and ambitious curriculum. In English, mathematics and science, the curriculum is well planned and sequenced so that pupils build their knowledge and skills from the start of Nursery through to Year 6. In these subjects, staff consistently deliver the curriculum well and routinely check what pupils know and remember. Any misconceptions or gaps in pupils' learning are swiftly identified and remedied.

Across some subjects, there is variation in how well the intended curriculum is implemented. For example, assessment is not consistently used to check what pupils know and can remember. This means that some pupils move on to new learning when they have gaps in their prior knowledge. When this happens, pupils struggle to build up their knowledge. This is because the school has not fully developed strategies that help pupils retain and recall key knowledge and vocabulary over longer periods.

Reading lies at the heart of the school's curriculum. Children learn to read as soon as they start school. Staff consistently follow the school's approach to teaching pupils how to read. Pupils quickly become fluent readers. Pupils who need additional support with their reading benefit from effective intervention. Pupils gain from engaging with different stories and texts. They develop a love of reading.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported throughout the school. Staff show complete dedication to ensuring that all pupils can access the curriculum. In lessons, teachers provide adaptive support where appropriate.

Children in the early years learn routines quickly. They benefit from warm relationships with adults, who help them learn the expectations. Early reading and mathematics skills are taught well. However, some of the activities that adults choose to develop some of the other areas of learning, limit children's opportunities to be curious and creative learners.

Pupils are very polite and courteous. In lessons, most pupils work hard and distractions to learning are rare. At social times, pupils get along well and play together respectfully. There is a strong emphasis on pupils becoming respectful and responsible young people. Older pupils thrive taking on leadership opportunities, such as being play leaders who lead games for younger pupils at breaktimes.

The school has high expectations of pupils' attendance and punctuality. Staff work closely with parents and carers to overcome any barriers that may prevent pupils from attending school as often as they should.

The development of pupils beyond the academic is promoted well. Pupils have opportunities to learn a range of different musical instruments and to perform in concerts and drama productions to develop their talents and interests. The school provides high-quality pastoral support for pupils. Pupils know how to look after their physical and mental health, including when online. Pupils learn about the importance of embracing and accepting differences. The school develops pupils' character through its strong work on vocation and giving back to the community.

Governors have a strong oversight of the school. Staff feel well supported and are proud to work at the school. Parents are extremely positive about both the academic education and the pastoral support that the school offers.

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 does not check carefully enough on how well the curriculum is delivered and how well pupils are achieving. As a result, the quality of education in some subject areas is variable and some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. The school needs to develop strategies to support pupils to recall the key knowledge and vocabulary set out in the curriculum.

- In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment well enough to check that pupils fully understand what they have been taught. This prevents pupils from building their knowledge securely on what they already know. The school should ensure that teachers use assessment strategies effectively in all subjects to support pupils' next steps in learning.
- In the early years, some of the planned learning activities are not ambitious enough. This limits children's opportunities to be curious and creative learners. The school should ensure that staff are well trained to plan learning opportunities that enable pupils to meet the aims of the ambitious curriculum.

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	104240
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10322728
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	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gerry Wintrip
Headteacher	Natalie Hill
Website	www.st-maryangel.walsall.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 May 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is within the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Its most recent section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character was carried out in February 2018. The school's next section 48 inspection is due to take place before 2026.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders.

- The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body.
- The lead inspector talked to a representative from the diocese and local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and music. 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 a sample of pupils' work. The inspectors also examined pupils' work in science.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Minutes of governing body meetings were scrutinised.
- The inspectors looked at records of pupils' attendance and behaviour. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and talked to them about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- 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 talked to parents at the start of the school day and considered the Ofsted Parent View survey and free-text comments. The inspectors also reviewed the responses to the staff and pupil surveys and gathered the views of staff and pupils through discussion.

Inspection team

Cathy Young, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Darren Bishop

Ofsted Inspector

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