

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Manor House Road, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 9PN

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 November 2024

Outcome

St Mary's Catholic Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Amy Pritchard. This school is part of St John Bosco Catholic Academy, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Helen Parkes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Phil Hancox.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and proud to attend this school. They say it is a community that ensures everybody is treated with respect, equality and kindness. They feel happy and safe, knowing that other pupils are kind and caring. From the early years, they get off to a good start and continue to achieve well throughout their primary years. When they leave Year 6, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils enjoy learning. They know that teachers want them to do well. Their behaviour in lessons demonstrates this as they respond well and settle to tasks set with enthusiasm. They are confident to ask questions and offer ideas. In most subjects, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well.

They enjoy the extra-curricular activities and the opportunities the school provides for trips, visits and pupil leadership. There are many clubs to cover a range of talents that are attended by all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged and SEND.

Teachers and leaders work hard to ensure that pupils' school experience is positive, enjoyable and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. There is strong sense of family among leaders, staff and pupils, which permeates all they do.

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

The school has ensured that the curriculum is ambitious and clearly sets out the important knowledge pupils need for future success. Lessons are delivered with enthusiasm by dedicated staff, who know the curriculum and teach it well. However, the reviewed curriculum has not yet been fully embedded to ensure that all pupils' learning is building over time.

Children begin to learn to read as soon as they start school. Leaders have ensured that well-trained, skilled practitioners deliver the phonics programme well. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know, which helps them to become fluent readers. Older pupils enjoy reading and say they like the regular reading awards and book prizes which celebrate reading in school.

Pupils enjoy mathematics and follow a systematic programme to ensure retrieval and recall are part of every lesson. This helps teachers to assess what pupils know and to provide support and challenge as needed. Support for pupils in class is strong. Overall, pupils make good progress in mathematics and use mathematical concepts well.

Pupils can remember some of the important knowledge they have learned within the wider curriculum. For example, in geography they can explain the water cycle and the impact of humans on landscapes. They can talk confidently about the globe, lines of latitude and longitude and how climate changes closer to the equator. Pupils also talk about skills learned in physical education, (PE) and can remember the early stages of ball control with targets for bouncing and how this helps them with netball and basketball games. They enjoy the opportunity to talk about learning and say that teachers often listen to what they like about their lessons.

A new staff team in early years are building an effective learning environment for talking and learning. They make sure that children have opportunities to practise what has been taught. As a result, children are settled, happy and ready to learn. They are well prepared for key stage 1.

Pupils enjoy learning and are proud of their achievements. They listen carefully in lessons and engage positively in activities and discussions. They respond well to staff's high expectations in lessons and around school.

The school has high expectations around attendance and is working hard to ensure that pupils come to school every day. Staff work closely with families to ensure that pupils are in school, ready to learn and achieving the best they can.

Provision for pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged is a strength of the school. There are clear systems for swift identification followed by a pathway of provision to offer additional support. Staff are trained well to develop and adapt individual learning, particularly within the additional provision created for those with complex needs who require individualised support. Most disadvantaged pupils make progress in line with their peers.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. They know how to staff safe, lead a healthy lifestyle and how to understand their emotions. Their knowledge and understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements is clear to see. They engage passionately with the leadership roles afforded to them and display a sense of maturity and citizenship in their work.

Trustees know what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. They provide the right level of challenge and support, particularly for senior leaders. They visit the school regularly to look at learning with teachers and pupils. Staff enjoy working at the school and appreciate leaders' support for their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some curriculum changes are not yet fully effective. As a result, pupils do not consistently learn key knowledge securely in some subjects. The school must ensure that all subjects are taught consistently to help pupils to achieve well across the curriculum.
- In the classroom, pupils who grasp the key knowledge quickly are sometimes not given the opportunity to deepen their understanding. The school must ensure that learning activities enable all pupils to achieve well from their starting points.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the

date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school St Mary's Catholic Primary School to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2015.

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	147795
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10344170
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	234
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Phil Hancox
CEO of the trust	Helen Parkes
Principal	Amy Pritchard
Website	www.stmaryswednesbury.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the St John Bosco Catholic Academy within the Arch Diocese of Birmingham.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is inspected as part of the Catholic Schools Inspectorate.
- The school has not been inspected as a Catholic school within the academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the principal, CEO, trust leaders and the chair of trustees.
- The inspector also met with a range of staff, including the vice principal, senior leaders, curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector evaluated the curriculum, looked at pupils' workbooks and carried out lesson visits with a focus on geography, history and PE.
- The inspector listened to a range of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktime. They spoke formally with groups of pupils as well as talking to pupils in lessons and looking at their work.
- The inspector reviewed information published on the school's website and other documentation provided by the school, including strategic plans and minutes of governors' meetings.
- The inspector considered the responses to the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The inspector spoke to a range of parents, considered written correspondence from parents, and took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Debra Newman, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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