

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Woodside Way, Kings Heath, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN5 7HX

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	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Kirstie Yuen. This school is part of Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust (OLICAT), which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the strategic executive lead, Tony Bishop, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christopher Donnellan.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is an inclusive and caring school. The school has high aspirations for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, to achieve their best possible outcomes.

Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations and enjoy their learning. They benefit from a range of carefully planned experiences, such as the opportunity to visit the Royal Opera House.

Pupils value learning how to keep themselves safe and benefit from weekly visits from the local police community support officer. Pupils can talk to any of the adults at school if anything is worrying them.

Pupils are proud to be part of their school's diverse community. They like learning about different cultures, languages and faiths. One pupil said that, 'The best thing about my school is that we all treat each other equally, no matter how we look or what we believe.'

Pupils really enjoy taking on extra responsibilities. These include being a school councillor or one of the school's 'peace makers'. Pupils are proud of their roles and the impact that they have on both the school and wider community. As one pupil explained, 'I enjoy helping to set up charity events and organising money and food donations for people who need it.'

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

Children get off to a secure start in the early years. The curriculum focuses on developing children's early language and communication. This is effective in supporting the high number of children who speak English as an additional language. Staff model new words and encourage children to use them in their own spoken language. The indoor and outdoor learning areas include resources which represent a range of cultures. Children enjoy learning through play. They can follow their own interests and develop independence. Children are well prepared for the transition to Year 1.

The school prioritises reading. Pupils learn to identify sounds and blend them together to decode unfamiliar words. Extra support is in place for any pupil who needs help to keep up. Pupils develop well as fluent readers. In key stage 2, pupils learn how to interpret what they have read. Staff read to pupils daily and encourage reading for pleasure. The school's outdoor library allows pupils to borrow books whenever they wish.

Previously, pupils did not achieve as highly as they could in some subjects. Curriculum improvements and focused training for all staff have had a positive impact on pupils' knowledge and skills in English and mathematics. For example, in mathematics, pupils now develop secure fluency, problem-solving and reasoning

skills. They benefit from additional opportunities to practise times tables and mental arithmetic. Pupils enjoy mathematics and feel well supported. Current pupils have more opportunities for writing and widening their vocabulary in a range of subjects.

The school has identified the important knowledge that pupils should know and remember. However, teachers' methods for checking pupils' understanding in lessons are inconsistent. Pupils cannot always recall or apply what they have been taught.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. The school works proactively with a range of external agencies to secure any support that these pupils need to access the same curriculum as their peers. When this is not possible, pupils with SEND access carefully adapted activities designed to meet their needs.

Arrangements for monitoring the impact of the curriculum vary between subjects. This means that the school does not have a fully accurate overview of curriculum strengths and weaknesses.

The vast majority of pupils listen intently, ask and answer questions and show an eagerness to do their best. For pupils who struggle to manage their emotions, high-quality pastoral support is provided. High behaviour expectations have led to a significant reduction in the number of suspensions.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is a real strength. Pupils show a mature understanding of diversity and equality. They are supported to develop virtues and values for life. Pupils participate in the life of the local community, such as visiting residents at the local care home. Pupils demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of different types of relationships. They know how British values relate to their everyday lives, for example by comparing the general election to voting for the school councillors.

The school supports staff with their workload. Staff feel their well-being is also considered. Staff value the high-quality training they receive and the chance to network with other professionals across the trust. Those with responsibility for governance know the school's strengths and improvement priorities well. They offer the school appropriate and effective support and challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers currently use a range of different ways to check how well pupils remember what they have been taught. The frequency of these checks, and how teachers use the information they gather, varies. As a result, pupils' knowledge

and understanding are not always secure. The school should ensure that teachers use assessment consistently and systematically to check pupils' understanding and inform their teaching.

- The quality of curriculum monitoring is not consistent across all subjects. In some areas, the arrangements for checking that the curriculum intent is implemented and having the desired impact are not secure. As a result, the school does not have a fully accurate overview of curriculum strengths and weaknesses. This limits opportunities for pupils to develop increasingly secure knowledge and skills in all areas. The school should ensure that there is consistent and accurate oversight of the curriculum, so that pupils know and remember more in all areas as they progress through the school.

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	142738
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10324186
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christopher Donnellan
CEO	Tony Bishop (Strategic Executive Lead)
Headteacher	Kirstie Yuen
Website	www.stmaryscatholicprimary.northants.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 November 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of OLICAT.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in April 2024.

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 inspection team carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and design technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and reviewed samples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team carried out a wider curriculum review of science and modern foreign languages. Inspectors reviewed samples of pupils' work and reviewed curriculum documents in these subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development, the early years, and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the trust and also members of the local governing body.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of 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 documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the results of Ofsted's survey for staff.

Inspection team

Luella Dhoore, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Chrissie Barrington

Ofsted 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 2024