

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

Upton Street, Batley, West Yorkshire WF17 8PH

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 February 2025

Outcome

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

The headteacher of this school is Philip Glover. This school is part of Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Rob Pritchard, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Antonia Dorsey.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school at the heart of its community. Relationships between staff, pupils, parents and carers are very strong. They are all very proud of the school. Pupils are polite, respectful and friendly to each other and to adults.

The school has high expectations of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils enjoy learning. They work hard in lessons, take pride in their work and participate exceptionally well. Pupils in Year 6 leave school prepared for their next stage of education.

Pupils behave very well. The school is a calm and orderly environment that is well looked after. Bullying is very rare. The school does not tolerate it. Pupils know that if they are worried about anything, staff will help them. They have great trust in staff.

Pupils have a strong sense of equality. They are adamant that all people should be treated equally and they know that their differences make them unique. The school goes the extra mile to make sure that all pupils, including pupils with SEND and those with some behavioural difficulties, take part in all aspects of school life. There is a very strong sense of 'togetherness' in the school.

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

The school's high ambition for pupils is reflected in the aspirational curriculum that pupils enjoy. Much thought has gone into shaping a curriculum that starts from the moment children join the school in the early years. Crucial knowledge is identified in each subject. Staff build learning in a logical way to meet the needs of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

Staff have received purposeful training that enables them to deliver the curriculum confidently and with enthusiasm. Teachers are knowledgeable about the curriculum subjects that they teach. They explain new learning clearly and this helps pupils engage well in lessons. However, in some subjects, teachers do not check pupils' knowledge adequately, so some pupils do not recall previous learning well. This hinders how well they build new learning.

Staff teach the phonics curriculum consistently well. Pupils who need additional support are given prompt help by well-trained staff. This helps these pupils to catch up quickly.

Reading is at the centre of the school's work. Staff are enthusiastic role models who promote a love of reading. From the early years onwards, they read books daily and pupils thoroughly enjoy them. In Nursery, children listened carefully to a story about a caterpillar and answered questions about the fruits that it had eaten. The books the school selects capture pupils' interest and many read frequently at home. Reading is taught well throughout the school. Over time, pupils develop into confident and competent readers.

Pupils write at length about the books or texts they are reading in class. In early years, staff support children's letter and number formation well. Older pupils' work shows accurate use of English grammar, punctuation and spelling along with neat and easy-to-read handwriting.

Across the school, teachers explain mathematical concepts clearly. This helps pupils build secure knowledge and complete tasks successfully. The new curriculum in mathematics is being delivered well. However, there are times when teachers move on to new topics before some pupils are ready. This leaves some pupils with gaps in learning. In early years, there are many opportunities for children to develop their mathematical skills and they count accurately.

Pupils contribute well to the life of their school community. School councillors are voted into role by their peers and meet with the headteacher to suggest improvements for the school. Year 6 play leaders organise games for pupils in key stage 1 during lunchtimes. 'Happy Minds' ambassadors make sure that pupils have someone to play with. Well-chosen class novels contribute to pupils' good understanding of cultural diversity.

In the past year, the number of staff in the school's attendance team has been increased. The school has a thorough and systematic procedure to support and challenge parents if pupils are not attending well. The school does not tolerate term-time holidays. It uses its

family support worker to provide support and help for parents who are not sending their children to school regularly. Consequently, pupils' attendance is improving, and leaders are doing all they can to make sure it continues to improve.

Trustees and members of the school's academy council fulfil their duties thoroughly. They are knowledgeable. They keep a close eye on staff's workload and ensure that children learn well and are kept safe. Expertise and curriculum design are shared across the trust to ease staff workload. Staff are proud to be members of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the school does not check pupils' understanding as well as in others. When this happens, gaps in pupils' understanding occur and are not fully addressed. The school should check pupils' understanding equally well across all subjects so that pupils learn well across all areas.
- The school has introduced a new mathematics curriculum that is continuing to embed. In mathematics, teachers move on to new topics before some pupils have secured learning. As a result, gaps in knowledge persist for some pupils. The school should intensify its work to further improve the quality of pupils' mathematics education so that all pupils learn and achieve well in mathematics.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Mary's Catholic Primary School Batley, to be good for overall effectiveness in July 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	148481
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10346765
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	279
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Antonia Dorsey
CEO of the trust	Rob Pritchard
Headteacher	Philip Glover
Website	www.stmarysbatley.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust in April 2022.
- St Mary's Catholic Primary Academy converted to become an academy school in April 2022. When its predecessor school, St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Batley, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- The headteacher was appointed in October 2022 and was acting headteacher for a year previous to that date.
- There have been significant changes to teaching staff since the predecessor school's last inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is a Catholic school in the Diocese of Leeds. Its section 48 inspection is expected to take place before the end of the autumn term 2028.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with leaders and held a discussion with a member of the trust board and members of the academy council. The inspector held a discussion with the chief education officer for the trust and a diocesan representative.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 throughout the day. He spoke to pupils about their views on behaviour in school. The inspector considered how the school supports pupils' personal development.
- The inspector spoke with a number of parents at the start of the school day. He analysed responses to Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Jim McGrath, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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