

# Inspection of St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

Crescent Lane, Clapham, London SW4 9QJ

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|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Inspection dates:         | 12 and 13 November 2024 |
| The quality of education  | <b>Good</b>             |
| Behaviour and attitudes   | <b>Good</b>             |
| Personal development      | <b>Outstanding</b>      |
| Leadership and management | <b>Good</b>             |
| Early years provision     | <b>Good</b>             |
| Previous inspection grade | Outstanding             |

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since November 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school is a hub in the community where pupils, staff, parents and carers are happy. It is a school that prioritises the development of the whole child. Leaders have used the wealth of local opportunities to support families, enhance pupils' experience and develop their understanding of the world around them. Pupils are taught to develop their own views, respect the opinions of others and provide support for their peers. They value other cultures while celebrating their own. This begins in early years and continues throughout the school.

Pupils feel safe and are kept safe because there are systems in place to support them if any problems should arise. Pupils understand the different ways they can raise concerns and seek support. For example, they can use the 'worry boxes' to share any concerns they might have.

Staff expect pupils to do well, and they put appropriate support in place for those who need it. Leaders work to identify the needs of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In lessons, tasks and activities are adapted to meet pupils' needs. Pupils typically learn and achieve well across the curriculum, meaning they are well prepared for their secondary education. Pupils behave well in lessons and during unstructured times. They enjoy learning and try hard in lessons.

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

Staff are well trained to deliver the agreed phonics programme with accuracy and precision. Pupils practise reading books that are closely matched to the sounds they are learning. This allows them to develop into confident and fluent readers. Staff identify quickly where pupils need extra support. This helps these pupils to catch up quickly. Pupils develop into confident and accurate readers who use this skill well to access the rest of the curriculum.

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum that is well sequenced to help pupils develop knowledge over time. This begins in early years where pupils build a strong foundation for future learning. For example, in mathematics, pupils learn about different ways of measuring the size of objects. Older pupils draw on this foundation knowledge when understanding and converting different units of measurement.

In many subjects, leaders have thought carefully about what pupils learn and when. However, sometimes there is not a clear link between the ambition of the intended curriculum and the activities undertaken in lessons. In these instances, pupils do not consistently develop the depth of knowledge and understanding intended and sometimes struggle to recall their learning.

Pupils with SEND are well supported to learn effectively. This is because teachers and support staff know and understand their different needs. Staff make appropriate adaptations to teaching and resources so that pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers, wherever this is possible. Leaders have identified that some

pupils' language is not at the level expected for their age. As a result, there is a sharp focus on improving pupils' vocabulary and diction. This begins in early years where teachers give children extensive opportunities to speak with adults and learn new words. It continues throughout the school with a focus on learning key vocabulary and building confidence to speak in public.

Pupils' personal development is a real strength of the school. Pupils are taught about the importance of respecting and valuing all members of the community. A vast number of additional activities are available for pupils to extend their learning experience, talents and interests. There are dedicated days when pupils learn about or celebrate something particularly pertinent to society, for example neurodiversity or European languages. There is an extensive array of clubs on offer, including sporting opportunities, a choir and music lessons. These begin in early years, enabling children to develop the skills and independence needed to make the most of the learning opportunities as they get older. There is an emphasis on inclusion so that these opportunities are for everyone in the school community. Pupils develop as young leaders through being prefects or part of the school council. They recognise that these opportunities help them to be more patient and prepare them for life at secondary school. Pupils are taught the importance of being caring, kind, compassionate young people who value their community and support the members of it.

The school has forged strong and positive partnerships with parents and carers, who are fulsome in their praise of the school. Leaders seek out support from all corners of the community to give pupils a breadth of experience far wider than what schools typically offer. This adds to the significant offer of extra-curricular experiences. Beyond this, the school utilises the support of local charities so if families are in crisis they can gain financial or social support. These two things combine to give a unique sense of community. Leaders have a sharp focus on attendance. They have carefully analysed data on pupil absence and put effective measures in place to support pupils to be in school regularly.

The school is well led. Leaders, including those responsible for governance, typically recognise the school's strengths and have worked to identify appropriate areas for improvement. They have sought support from outside experts to develop these areas. However, systems for checking the implementation and impact of the curriculum are not as well developed. This means leaders are not fully aware of some of the inconsistencies and, therefore, have not put the necessary support in place. Leaders have created an environment where members of staff are happy in their work. Staff recognise the extensive initiatives in place to manage 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)

- In some instances, teaching and the activities provided do not match the ambition of the intended curriculum. This means there are some areas where pupils' knowledge and understanding are not as well developed. The school should sharpen the processes for checking the implementation of the planned curriculum so that staff are fully supported in ensuring pupils learn and remember more across subjects and phases.

## 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

|                                            |                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 100636                                                                       |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Lambeth                                                                      |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10345669                                                                     |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                                                                      |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided                                                              |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11                                                                      |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                                                        |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 318                                                                          |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                                                           |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Mary McGowan                                                                 |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Kelly Doody                                                                  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.st-marys.lambeth.sch.uk">www.st-marys.lambeth.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 20 November 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005                  |

## Information about this school

- This is a Roman Catholic voluntary-aided primary school within the Diocese of Southwark.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in June 2024.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior staff and curriculum leaders. Discussions were also held with representatives of the local authority, the diocese and the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history, computing and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. Other subjects were also considered as part of the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's development priorities and behaviour and attendance records.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were gathered through discussions and by considering their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

### **Inspection team**

|                             |                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Amy Jackson, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Sophie Cavanagh             | Ofsted Inspector |
| David Lloyd                 | Ofsted Inspector |

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